



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
August 7 – 14, 2015

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Transgender singer breaking new ground on First Nations

Aalayna Spence says at first organizing committees didn't know which gender category she should compete in

By Jillian Taylor, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 07, 2015 4:15 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 07, 2015 4:15 AM CT



Aalayna Spence, who is a transgender woman, says she had to fight for her right to compete in the female category in singing competitions on First Nations. (Aalayna Spence)

Aalayna Spence is singing in Treaty Days talent competitions across the north this month. She says at first she wasn't allowed to compete because she is transgender.

"I called and they said no," explained the 21-year-old. "They asked me, 'What does it say on your ID?' I said for the time being, male. They said, 'We can't have you singing in the female category.'"

Spence said she was devastated by the decision.

"I essentially felt that I was being denied my right to sing and sing where I felt comfortable."



Aalayna Spence has been singing on stage since she was 10 years old. She says it saved her life while she was struggling with depression and with her identity. (Aalayna Spence)

Spence is from Nelson House. She began her transition from male to female in 2013.

She said a lot of people in First Nations communities don't understand what it means to be transgender. She said that is why she called both Norway House and Cross Lake to let them know who she is.

"My mom didn't want me to have to go through any flack just in case say I won or if I placed," said Spence. "She didn't want me to have to step down just because some ignorant people complained."

Spence said she has been bullied since she was a child. She said that experience has given her the strength to fight for who she is and what she thinks she deserves.

With the help of her HR specialist, both communities changed their minds and allowed her to compete in the female category at their Treaty Days talent shows.

"I felt on top of the world, It was a small victory; but for me it was the biggest victory of my life," said Spence.

"I wholeheartedly believe I was meant to transition," she added.

"As hard as it is, I believe my mission in life to bring forth a generation of acceptance and tolerance for everybody. Not just for the LGBT community, but for everybody."

Spence already competed in Cross Lake last weekend and said it was a great experience. She competes in Norway House on Saturday night.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/transgender-singer-breaking-new-ground-on-first-nations-1.3182204>

Fort Edmonton, Métis Nation of Alberta sign agreement of understanding

By Sahar Saiffee, Edmonton Journal August 7, 2015



Metis fiddler Brianna Lizotte led the procession for a memorandum of understanding to formalize a commitment between the Metis Nation, Fort Edmonton and the mayor to work together to present Metis stories with historical accuracy at Fort Edmonton Park, in Edmonton on Friday August 7, 2105.

EDMONTON - Fort Edmonton Park signed a historic agreement with the Métis Nation of Alberta on Friday to solidify a partnership to provide accurate Métis cultural programming toward the park's Indigenous People's Experience.

The two parties formalized their relationship with a memorandum of understanding during an annual general assembly held by the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Mayor Don Iveson was present to witness the signing.

"It wasn't that long ago that Fort Edmonton reached out to Treaty Six to ensure that First Nations were included in the storytelling at Fort Edmonton so the story that is represented there is not only colonial representation, but a respectful interpretation of history that accounts for the experience of indigenous people prior to colonization here, as well as a truthful telling of what first contact was like," he said.

Iveson said future plans for Fort Edmonton will make the park more open to indigenous and non-indigenous people.

"The agreement of Treaty Six focuses specifically on the First Nations side of the history and committing to work with Treaty Six so I'm thrilled that we're here today to finally recognize that in complement to that is the rich history of the Métis people which is so important to Alberta."

Douglas Goss, Fort Edmonton's management company board chairman, affirmed a long-term commitment to work with the Métis Nation of Alberta in the agreement.

“Fort Edmonton Park and the Métis Nation of Alberta will work collaboratively and in good faith to ensure the diversity, richness and integrity of Métis history and culture incorporated into cultural programming accurately,” Goss said.

Today was a good day for the Métis Nation, said Audrey Poitras, president of the Métis Nation of Alberta. “It’s very important that, and I know that the City of Edmonton wants the same thing and Fort Edmonton Park wants the same thing, to make sure that when we leave behind our historical data that it is accurate, it is there for our children, our grandchildren and generations to come to be very proud,” Poitras said.

This marks the second memorandum signed this year as a step toward the Indigenous People’s Experience at Fort Edmonton.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Fort+Edmonton+M%C3%A9tis+Nation+Alberta+sign+agreement+understanding/11274703/story.html>

GN launches Inuktitut songwriting contest

"By singing in Inuktitut, Nunavummiut are contributing to the vibrancy and strength of the Inuit culture"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, August 10, 2015 - 9:41 am



The Inuksuk Drum Dancers perform a traditional song at an Iqaluit event — a new GN contest seeks more original Inuit language songs. (FILE PHOTO)

If you have a song in an Inuit language which you’d like to share, here’s your chance.

The Government of Nunavut launched Qilaut, Nunavut’s new annual Inuktitut songwriting contest, on World Indigenous Day, Aug. 9.

Qilaut was created to celebrate Nunavut’s vibrant Inuktitut music scene and promote the use of Inuktitut in all areas of daily life.

The name Qilaut, which means “drum,” was chosen to honour traditional and contemporary Inuktut music, an Aug. 7 release on the new contest said.

“By singing in Inuktut, Nunavummiut are contributing to the vibrancy and strength of the Inuit culture,” the release said.

All residents of Nunavut may submit their original Inuktut songs. Winners will receive cash awards and their winning submissions will be recorded professionally.

A compilation album will be distributed in February 2016, during Uqausirmut Quviasuutiqarniq, Nunavut’s annual celebration of Inuktut and Inuit culture.

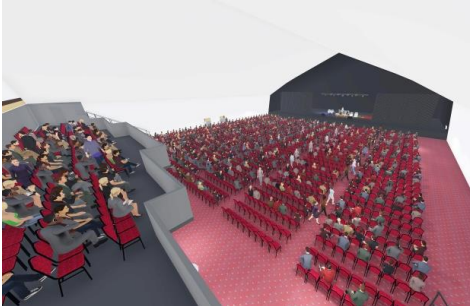
For the official contest rules and more information about Qilaut 2015, go [here](#).

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674gn_launches_inuktut_songwriting_contest/

River Cree to open improved music venue by October

By Lloyd Wipf, Edmonton Journal August 10, 2015



Rendering of the soon-to-be-reopened River Cree Casino music venue

The River Cree Resort and Casino has begun construction on a new and improved entertainment venue that is set to open for shows in early October.

The structure will open in two phases and will be fully functional in early November when all amenities have been installed.

Construction of the new facility comes after the old entertainment hall, called The Venue, was voluntarily shut down after a report revealed that the structure was not up to code.

“We are very excited to move forward and unveil our plans for the new venue,” said Robert Morin, CEO, River Cree Enterprises in a statement. “This is a bigger and better facility than the previous version. We are proud to have moved quickly to plan this

structure and begin construction. Moving forward we will continue to do our due diligence to ensure that the safety of our guests, patrons and employees remains our top priority.”

The new venue will be a fabric structure, much like the old big white tent, with the steel and fabric manufactured in the U.S. The venue will be tested to make sure it passes all permanent structure codes, and has an estimated lifespan of 50 to 60 years. However, there are still plans to build a permanent structure at some point in the future.

The new venue, which has not yet been named, will have washrooms and seating will be increased from 1,700 to 2,500 seats, which will also be bigger and more comfortable. There will be a second floor with 10 boxes and balcony seating. The venue will have a foyer that will connect to the casino so patrons will not have to brave the elements to get to the show.

“One of the biggest complaints that we got from our costumers is that the seats were uncomfortable, so we are happy that we can change that,” said Vik Mahajan, general manager for River Cree.

“This new entertainment structure will exceed our patrons’ expectations and we will elevate the delivery and calibre of our entertainment programing.”

The old venue was shut down in March. River Cree had to move scheduled shows to different venues such as Northlands, the Jubilee Auditorium and the Shaw Conference Centre. There have not been any show cancellations, and the closure resulted in only a minor interruption in the schedule, said Mahajan.

“It was very important for us to look out for our community and the people who have supported us so that they wouldn’t lose out on anything and still be able to see the shows that they wanted to see,” he says. “Of course, it impacts business because we don’t have a venue that brings people to the resort, but our immediate concern is the safety of our customers.”

The first show scheduled for the new venue is Air Supply scheduled for Oct. 3. Upcoming shows including the Beach Boys on Aug. 29 and Belinda Carlisle on Aug. 30 have been relocated to Northlands.

The new venue will be important for the music scene in the city as there have been several closures in recent years, including the Pawn Shop, the Artery, New City, the Roxy Theatre, Edmonton Event Centre and the Elevation Room.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/River+Cree+open+improved+music+venue+October/11279553/story.html>

Okpik's Dream, Nunavik dog sled documentary, wins award

'My dogs have helped me so tremendously, they have made my life whole, I am very pleased today'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 12, 2015 7:56 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 12, 2015 9:41 AM CT



An inspirational film about a one-legged musher from Quaqtaq, Que., who participates in the Ivakkak race each year, won an award at the 25th First Peoples Festival in Montreal on August 3. (Okpik's Dream)

Nunavik musher Harry Okpik never thought he'd be the subject of a documentary, let alone an award-winning feature film, but that's exactly what happened last week when *Okpik's Dream* took home the Community award at the 25th First Peoples Festival in Montreal.

"My dogs have helped me so tremendously, they have made my life whole, I am very pleased today," Okpik told the CBC in Inuktitut.

Mushing was a childhood dream for Okpik. When he was 11 years old, he witnessed the Inuit dog slaughter – the mass killing of sled dogs in the early 1960s that was only recently [acknowledged](#).

Twelve years later, after a period in residential schools, another tragedy struck when Okpik lost his leg in a hunting accident, an event he said changed his whole life.

"I can tell you that there was period shortly after my amputation that I gave up all hope," he said. "But now, looking back at the point in my life, it was a sad period, but I survived. I am happy and proud today."



'My dogs have helped me so tremendously, they have made my life whole, I am very pleased today,' Harry Okpik told the CBC in Inuktitut. (Catbird Productions)

Against all odds, Okpik went on to take part in the Ivakkak, the annual 600 km Inuit dog sled race across Northern Quebec.

"Harry's story is one of hope and it really touches on ancestral traits and values of Inuit," said filmmaker Laura Rietveld.

But Rietveld is reluctant to take all the praise for the film.

"No film in the North gets made without the help of many people in the North. We've been filming since 2012 and we finished filming last year, and so many people throughout the North helped us."

Okpik's Dream won first prize in the festival's "community" category, which recognizes the resiliency of aboriginal communities.

Okpik's Dream will air again on CBC television in Quebec on August 29 at 7 p.m.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/okpik-s-dream-nunavik-dog-sled-documentary-wins-award-1.3188115>

Manitoba Museum makes aboriginal history permanent exhibit

Winnipeg Sun

First posted: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 02:21 PM CDT



"By including the Berens family's collection as part of the 'We Are All Treaty People' exhibit, the Manitoba Museum is ensuring this family's contribution and their history in our province is not forgotten," Premier Greg Selinger said in a release.

Two new permanent exhibits at the Manitoba Museum will celebrate our aboriginal history.

"We Are All Treaty People" and "The Berens Family Collection" opened Wednesday in the Parklands Mixed Woods Gallery.

While "Treaty People" started as a temporary exhibit last summer, only five of the eight Manitoba Treaty medals were presented; now the entire collection will be on display, thanks to a Manitoba collector. The exhibit uses historical photos to take viewers back to the time when the treaties were signed. One notable photo, an original print from the 1870s, is of Chief William Mann -- who signed Treaty One on behalf of the people living at Fort Alexander, now Saugeen First Nation, and kept in the Mann family until this year. And now the medals have been paired with traditional pipes and pipe bags.

"It is unusual for a museum to display sacred artefacts like these pipes and pipe bags, but without them we would have failed to represent First Nations agency and understandings," said Maureen Matthews, curator of native ethnology at the Manitoba Museum, the exhibit's co-ordinator.

"The Berens Family Collection" explores Treaty No. 5, which covers most of Manitoba. Chief Jacob Berens negotiated Treaty No. 5 in 1875 at Berens River -- and now the chief's suit, as well as the medal he received to commemorate the negotiations, is on display.

"By including the Berens family's collection as part of the 'We Are All Treaty People' exhibit, the Manitoba Museum is ensuring this family's contribution and their history in our province is not forgotten," Premier Greg Selinger said in a release.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/08/12/manitoba-museum-makes-aboriginal-history-permanent-exhibit>

Manitoba Museum opens two new permanent Aboriginal exhibits

All eight Manitoba Treaty Medals are on display for the first time with the opening of We Are All Treaty People and The Berens Family Collection



Dr. Maureen Matthews, curator of native ethnology at the Manitoba Museum, and Elder Charles Nelson, listen as Elder Doreen Roulette talks about the new exhibits, We Are All Treaty People and The Berens Family Collection.

Published on Tue Aug 11 2015

Dr. Maureen Matthews is extremely proud of the two new exhibits at The Manitoba Museum and she says while their evolution seemed to benefit from lucky circumstances, she knows for a fact there was no luck involved.

“This exhibit came together through numerous acts of serendipity and I know now that serendipity isn’t an aboriginal concept,” said Matthews, the Museum’s curator of native ethnology.

“Things happen for a reason, I have pipes, I have people, I have spirit entities to thank for the way that things come together and I thank them all.”

The exhibits – We Are All Treaty People and The Berens Family Collection – opened today at The Manitoba Museum.

We Are All Treaty People was originally a temporary exhibit with five of the eight Manitoba Treaty medals on display. The permanent exhibit now has all eight medals, along with photographs, pipes and pipe bags on display to signify the First Nations’ commitment to the Treaty as a sacred undertaking meant to last forever.

The Berens Family Collection takes a closer look at Treaty No. 5, which was negotiated by Chief Jacob Berens at Berens River.

“These two exhibits give voice to the stories of indigenous people whose treaties with the government of Canada really have shaped our province in a significant way,” said Scott Craig, chair of The Manitoba Museum board of governors.

“There are eight medals on display in the exhibits and they represent all eight treaties in the province of Manitoba and this is the first time in our museum’s history that all eight medals have been together in one place and it was a long journey in the making to get them here.”

James Wilson, commissioner of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, was on hand to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the museum and the commission with the aim of sharing research and cooperating on exhibition projects. He said the work already done by the two entities shows progress is being made.

“The elders had quite an ongoing debate about whether these artefacts should be displayed in the first place, ‘cause there’s been a history, globally, between indigenous people and museums, it hasn’t been always a positive relationship,” Wilson said.

“The elders went back and forth and at one point one of the elders said, ‘you know, if we don’t display these things, our children won’t see them either. So if you are going to display them, here’s how to do it properly’.”

Direct Link: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/2015/08/12/manitoba-museum-opens-two-new-permanent-aboriginal-exhibits.html>

UWinnipeg, WAG appoint first-in-Canada indigenous arts position

Julie Nagam will research and develop a series of courses, exhibitions and related programs

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 13, 2015 11:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 13, 2015 11:47 AM CT



Julie Nagam said she foresees "a pivotal moment for Winnipeg as a key site for contemporary Indigenous art." (Courtesy Julie Nagam)

The University of Winnipeg and Winnipeg Art Gallery have created a first-in-Canada to highlight indigenous art.

Julie Nagam has been appointed as chair in History of Indigenous Arts in North America. The joint position between the university and WAG will involve research and teaching in the U of W's department of history as well as curatorial and exhibition work at the gallery.

Nagam, who assumes the post this week, is responsible for researching and developing a series of courses, exhibitions and related programs "designed to engage, enhance, and develop the area of Indigenous art," a news release stated.

My goals are to empower a new generation of students with knowledge of Indigenous artists, curators, activists, and scholarship. - *Julie Nagam*

"This is an important first for Winnipeg and for Canada — and the WAG is proud to be spearheading this international, game-changing initiative with UWinnipeg," WAG director Stephen Borys stated in the release.

Nagam comes to Winnipeg from the Indigenous Visual Culture Program and the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences at OCAD University (formerly the Ontario College of Art and Design). She holds a PhD from York University, as well as an MA (Native Studies) and a BA Honours (Women Studies and Art History) from the University of Manitoba.

"I foresee a pivotal moment for Winnipeg as a key site for contemporary Indigenous art," she states in the news release.

"My goals are to empower a new generation of students with knowledge of Indigenous artists, curators, activists, and scholarship, and to place the WAG and UWinnipeg as leading institutions that will showcase the strength of the Indigenous arts community within Manitoba and abroad."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/uwinnipeg-wag-appoint-first-in-canada-indigenous-arts-position-1.3189921>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Group wants proposed menthol cigarette ban to apply to aboriginal tobacco industry

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: August 6, 2015 | Last Updated: August 6, 2015 6:53 PM EDT



Studies suggest flavoured tobacco attracts young people to cigarettes, essentially creating a new generation of smokers. Joe Raedle / GETPICS

On the eve of provincial hearings into a bill banning the sale of menthol cigarettes in Quebec, an advocacy group wants the government to apply the proposed law on the aboriginal tobacco industry.

But representatives from Kahnawake's cigarette trade say the province has no jurisdiction in Mohawk territory, a sentiment echoed by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. Meanwhile, Premier Philippe Couillard's Liberal government says it cannot impose regulations on a section of the industry that largely operates outside the law.

Still, the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco will tour the province and turn the heat up on the Liberals until the Bill 44 hearings begin later this month. Though First Nations have a constitutionally guaranteed right to grow tobacco on reserves, their tax-free sale to non-aboriginals is illegal (hence the reason aboriginal cigarettes are often referred to as contraband).

"By banning menthol cigarettes in the province but doing nothing to stop their sale on reserves, the government is just gifting the contraband tobacco industry five per cent of the market share," said Carlos A. Godoy, a spokesperson for the NCAC. "Menthols, they're available in Kahnawake. So the contraband industry has the capabilities of producing menthols, they're just going to increase production. Who wouldn't? They're smart business people. ... It nullifies what Bill 44 is trying to do."

Flavoured cigars and cigarettes are available — at heavily discounted prices — in the dozens of smoke shops that line Kahnawake's Highway 132. Tens of thousands of commuters navigate that stretch of road every day on their way across the Mercier Bridge and many of them buy their tobacco products from Mohawk vendors.

Studies suggest flavoured tobacco attracts young people to cigarettes, essentially creating a new generation of smokers. Godoy and his group worry that if customers can't get their

menthols in a dépanneur, they'll just visit Kahnawake, Kanesatake or Akwesasne to buy one of the dozen or so brands of flavoured aboriginal tobacco.

In Kahnawake — the heart of Canada's billion-dollar aboriginal cigarette trade — the band council is set to impose regulations on the reserve's tobacco producers. But because those rules are still being negotiated, the Mohawk council can't say if it will impose Quebec's proposed menthol ban.

"It's way too early to say, until we get into the community consultation process it's hard to say what direction this will take," said Gina Deer, the band council's chief in charge of the tobacco portfolio. "Kahnawake will decide on its own laws and its own regulations and even if (Quebec) implements something it doesn't necessarily mean we'll follow suit."

Tobacco is Kahnawake's economic engine and by far the territory's largest employer — accounting for jobs in cigarette factories, storage, shipment and wholesaling. But the council and industry insiders are quick to point out that their product meets the quality and safety standards set by Quebec. That claim would be undermined if Quebec follows through on Bill 44 and Kahnawake doesn't implement the same ban.

One well-established member of the aboriginal tobacco trade told the Montreal Gazette there is a willingness to co-operate with the Quebec government as long as there is "respect and recognition" of Mohawk sovereignty.

For its part, the Liberal government says it works hard to fight the so-called contraband tobacco industry. Quebec's tax laws outline harsh fines and even prison sentences for people caught smuggling mass quantities of cigarettes off reserve. In fact, the 2015 provincial budget set aside new funds to this end.

When contacted by the Montreal Gazette, a representative from Public Health Minister Lucie Charlebois's office said she doesn't see the link between Bill 44 and an increase in aboriginal tobacco sales. But the NCAC claims Charlebois "has her head in the sand."

"The government's own numbers show that, in Quebec, about 19,000 baggies of 200 contraband cigarettes are sold every day," said Godoy. "That's a hell of a lot of cigarettes. How many of those cigarettes are going into the hands of underage kids that shouldn't be smoking? Now if they increase production of menthols, it's more money for them and more cigarettes that could ultimately wind up in the hands of children."

Just as in stores across the province, Kahnawake's smoke shacks check their customers' identification to ensure they're of age. But Mohawk vendors can't control — and perhaps choose not to ask — what people who buy cigarettes by the carload do with the product once they cart it off-reserve.

“Tobacco, there is a demand for it just like alcohol, it’s a personal choice,” said Deer. “It may not be good for you, I don’t smoke and I endorse non-smoking, but again it’s a personal choice.”

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/group-wants-proposed-menthol-cigarette-ban-to-apply-to-aboriginal-tobacco-industry>

Sask. First Nations sue bank, audit firm over undetected fraud



Whitecap Dakota First Nation Chief Darcy Bear speaks to a crowd in Saskatoon prior to a greeting from Prince Edward. (Kevin Menz)

The Canadian Press

Published Friday, August 7, 2015 12:51PM EDT

SASKATOON -- A First Nation in Saskatchewan is suing a bank and an auditing company, alleging they failed to catch fraudulent transactions totalling \$5.8 million.

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation says its former senior accountant wrote cheques totalling that amount to himself and another account between January 2009 and July 2013.

The band's statement of claim alleges the Royal Bank should have been suspicious about the high dollar amount of the cheques, and KPMG should have uncovered the transactions during its annual audits of the First Nation's finances.

The accountant, Hugo Gallegos, was fired in 2013 and has been charged with fraud, theft and other offences.

The statement of claim contains allegations that have not been proven in court, and RBC and KPMG have not commented on the lawsuit or filed statements of defence.

The lawsuit lays out detailed allegations as to how Gallegos may have transferred a large amount of money to accounts held by himself and his mother, via more than 1,700 cheques.

"Gallegos cultivated a relationship with the RBC branch tellers and other employees. Gallegos then exploited this relationship to gain the RBC employees' trust and confidence, all of which restrained the employees from making reasonable and necessary inquiries into Gallegos's huge volume of unusual transactions," the statement reads.

"RBC was, or ought to have been aware, that Whitecap did not write cheques to its other employees in anywhere near the number and totals of the cheques written to Gallegos, if at all."

RBC spokesman Robb Ritchie said Friday the bank would not comment on the case, citing "client confidentiality and the litigation surrounding this matter".

KPMG did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/sask-first-nations-sue-bank-audit-firm-over-undetected-fraud-1.2506767>

Aboriginal representation will boost Corporate Canada's bottom line

Pamela Jeffery And Jean Paul Gladu

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

Published Saturday, Aug. 08, 2015 3:00AM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Aug. 08, 2015 3:00AM EDT

The relationship between Corporate Canada and aboriginal people is at a critical inflection point. Until very recently, that relationship was dictated by bottom-line results with little if any engagement of aboriginal communities, which had limited economic and political power. That is changing as these same aboriginal communities are finding their voice and the support of the Supreme Court, which has significantly broadened the scope of aboriginal land rights with last year's *Tsilhqot'in* decision and shifted the balance of power in the process. The historic judgment builds on the 200 major land rights' cases indigenous people have already won across the country by declaring aboriginal title to lands outside of a reserve. It has also shifted the balance of power.

Natural resources account for almost 20 per cent of Canada's GDP. Many development projects are in the backyards of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Corporations

that want to operate successfully in these communities have to consult, accommodate and find new ways of building or rebuilding relationships that have been broken for some time, or risk economic loss.

What better way to do that than to reflect the aboriginal voice at all levels, from the front line to the boardroom? Integrating the values, skills, perspectives and aspirations of Canada's indigenous people will filter through operations to the bottom line. This isn't just good for aboriginal people. It's good for business and the economic health of all Canadians.

A recent TD study shows the direct aboriginal contribution to Canada's GDP is more than \$32-billion. Yet, according to the 2014 Canadian Board Diversity Centre's annual report card, aboriginal people hold only 0.8 per cent of corporate board seats in this country, even though the aboriginal community is the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population, representing 4.3 per cent of the overall population in 2011. This growth, combined with the rich natural resources of aboriginal communities, makes it essential for Corporate Canada to engage them.

It's time corporations reflected on what it would mean to local aboriginal communities to have aboriginal representation on their boards, helping to make decisions on the landscape that affects them directly. Fort McKay First Nation, north of Fort McMurray, Alta., has been able to transition from an adversarial relationship into a partnership with surrounding oil sands companies because those companies found a way to include the community in decision-making. The result: Those businesses are generating \$1.5-billion to \$2-billion a year in revenue.

Prince Rupert, B.C.,-based Lax Kw'alaams band was recently offered \$1-billion from a joint venture led by Malaysia's state-owned Petronas to approve the Pacific Northwest liquefied natural gas project. The offer underscores how rapidly relations between aboriginal communities and Corporate Canada are evolving, as well as what's at stake. It's not always about money and benefits; it's also about process. Canada will only benefit from deals like this if all sides come together and work collaboratively.

Calgary-based Suncor Energy Inc., gets it. It has been recognized for its efforts in engaging and building relationships with more than 150 aboriginal communities and groups across Canada, with silver status in the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business's progressive aboriginal relations program.

The alternative: when companies are not willing to build relationships and bring aboriginal people to the table to understand their concerns about environmental impact and to help mitigate potential risks, projects are disrupted, costing businesses tens of thousands of dollars a day. We're at a fork in the road. Corporations have a choice: they can work with aboriginal communities to find mutual ways to benefit or be at loggerheads and everyone loses.

The need for corporate boards to represent the people they serve is not a new concept, and it is one that is gaining traction. The urgency to increase boardroom diversity has gained momentum since the 2008-09 financial crisis, which highlighted the need for enhanced governance, efficacy and competence at the board level. The business case is clear: diverse thought and opinion at the board level leads to better decision-making, improved performance for companies and improved outcomes for the stakeholders and communities they serve. Increasing the number of aboriginal board members sends a profound message: You are important enough to us that we need to have your people helping make decisions on the landscape that affects your community.

Bottom line: Shareholders are demanding more from businesses, boards and nominating committees. To that end, the federal government announced plans in its recent budget to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act to adopt a “comply or explain” framework in order to help increase the number of women on the boards of all federally regulated companies. This builds on what is already in place in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut and Saskatchewan for public companies. It’s an important step, but at the same time we recognize diversity goes beyond gender.

Corporations have an opportunity to make a leap forward in correcting the missteps of the past with aboriginal communities, and to prosper as a result. But it’s going to take leadership on both sides to find space for that conversation to happen and to learn how to work together. The boardroom is that space.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/aboriginal-representation-will-boost-the-bottom-line/article25886706/>

First Nations file financial reports

[William Stodalka](#) / Alaska Highway News

August 12, 2015 08:43 AM



Four out of seven First Nations in northeastern B.C. have filed their First Nations Financial Transparency Act documents by the July 29 deadline.

These documents show how much money each First Nation earned and spent, including how much chiefs and councillors were paid in 2014-15.

The four bands that filed their documents on time were the Fort Nelson, Blueberry River, Prophet River, and West Moberly First Nations. Filings for the Saulteau, Halfway River, and Doig River First Nations do not appear on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) website.

Messages directed to the band offices of Blueberry River, Fort Nelson, and Doig River First Nations, along with West Moberly Chief Roland Willson, seeking comment have not been returned.

Saulteau Chief Nathan Parenteau said that his band would be posting their financials in their near future.

The 2015 numbers noted below are for the financial year that ended March 31. All 2014 numbers are for the financial year that ended March 31, 2014.

Fort Nelson revenues top \$18M

Of the four First Nations that filed in northeastern B.C., Fort Nelson First Nation showed the highest revenues, at around \$18.7 million.

Their largest single source of revenue was from the AANDC at around \$5.9 million. Others sources of income included investments, and \$60,000 generated from property taxes.

The band posted expenses of around \$17 million, with the largest single slice of spending on education, at around \$3.4 million.

The Fort Nelson First Nation operates the Chalo School.

Liz Logan is the current chief of Fort Nelson First Nation. She received around \$64,000 in pay over seven months. All together, the nine people who made up chief and council over the past year earned a total of about \$392,600 in salaries and expenses.

An election was held in 2014 that resulted in two new councillors, with Liz Logan taking over as chief from Sharleen Gale, who continues to serve as councillor.

The documents did not detail how much Gale made as councillor and how much she made as a chief, but the report stated she earned just over \$49,000 for the 12 months she served in both positions.

Fewer dollars for Blueberry River

Blueberry River First Nation saw both its revenue and expenses decline from 2014 numbers, their documents state.

In 2015, the band posted revenues of about \$7.4 million, with expenses of about \$9.5 million.

In 2014, revenues were about \$13 million, with expenses of about \$12 million.

Despite running an operating deficit, Blueberry is carrying an accumulated operating surplus of about \$16.5 million.

Blueberry Chief Marvin Yahey earned around \$108,000 in pay. All together, he and four other councillors earned a total of about \$469,000 and claimed expenses of around \$4,600.

Revenue up for West Moberly

The West Moberly First Nation's finances grew last year, with about an extra \$2 million coming from a category called "industrial contracts."

In 2015, band revenues were about \$9.4 million, an increase from 2014 revenues of about \$6.8 million. The band's 2015 expenditures were about \$9 million, an increase from 2014 expenditures of \$7.9 million.

West Moberly First Nation Chief Roland Willson earned about \$73,300 in actual salary, with \$2,200 in other remuneration. Five people who served in four councillor positions earned a combined \$290,000 in actual salary and other remuneration. They posted about \$50,300 in expenses.

Prophet River smallest for funds

Prophet River appears to have the smallest revenue and expenditures of the First Nations that have filed their reports.

Revenues for 2015 were around \$5.5 million, with expenses around \$4.2 million.

Their largest single expense of the 25 or so items listed for the year was called "MOU program," which accounted for roughly \$829,000 in actual expenses for 2015. No further detail was given about this expense.

The band's largest single source of revenue was Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, which transferred \$1,090,000 to the band in 2015.

Chief Lynette Tsakoza earned about \$104,500, with expenses of about \$18,000.

The other two councillors, Jennifer Reno and Beverly Stager, earned about \$169,000 in total, and reported about \$22,100 in expenses.

Tsakoza noted the responsibilities of a First Nation chief are "totally different" than those of a municipal mayor.

"Members are the ones who vote you in and we do follow up on the things they want," she said.

Chief pay higher than average

A preliminary analysis of the B.C. First Nations who posted their finances shows that these four northeastern chiefs pay were higher than the provincial average of around \$61,000.

Blueberry River First Nation band administrator Cici Sterritt said last year that First Nations' leaders responsibilities are different than those of a municipal mayor.

It takes "quite a bit of time" for these individuals to meet with major proponents, contractors, and other industrial powers about industrial development on their traditional lands, Sterritt added.

"If you compared to what a municipal government gets and what we receive, it's very minimal," Sterritt said last year.

"It's like a provincial government," she continued, "I would say, because we are responsible for health services on the reserve... our social development, our housing operations and maintenance in the building, the roads, the garbage.

"We also have our school that's on-reserve," she said.

- See more at: <http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/regional-news/first-nations-file-financial-reports-1.2028277#sthash.fhSo6AeM.dpuf>

Aboriginal Community Development

Cross Lake finishes on top at First Nations firefighter competition

[Ian Graham](#) / Thompson Citizen

August 7, 2015 12:00 AM



Ten teams from around the province competed at the 2015 Manitoba First Nations Firefighters Competition in Thompson on Aug. 1. Photograph By Ian Graham

Thompson's first time as host of the Manitoba First Nations Firefighters Competition on Aug. 1 was memorable for two of the Northern Manitoba teams among the 10 participating teams, as Cross Lake took first overall and a berth in the national competition, while Garden Hill finished third behind Sagkeeng.

The champions move on to the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada National Firefighter Competition in Rama, Ont. on Aug. 15.

Other teams competing at the event at the Thompson Regional Community Centre parking lot included Opaskwayak Cree Nation, the Northlands Densuline First Nation at Lac Brochet, Ebb and Flow, Lake Manitoba and St. Theresa Point. Women's teams from Garden Hill and St. Theresa Point also competed.

"Everything went great," said Ivban Hart of Keewatin Tribal Council, which hosted the event. "The teams that were there enjoyed the weekend in Thompson. I heard nothing but good comments about Thompson being the host."



The Northlands Denesuline First Nation at Lac Brochet was one of eight communities represented at the Manitoba First Nations Firefighter Competition in Thompson Aug. 1. - Ian Graham

Competitors took part in hose rolling, high-flow knockdown, endurance relay and self-contained breathing apparatus relay (SCBA) events, along with a bucket brigade that saw Thompson Fire & Emergency Services (TFES) compete against the Garden Hill women's team.

"That was a fun event for them," said Hart, adding that organizers and competitors were thankful for everyone else who chipped in, including the provincial Office of the Fire Commissioner, which assisted with organization and provided equipments, as well as TFES.

"They were a huge help," said Hart. "They provided all of the officials. Without them, this event wouldn't be possible."

TFES Chief John Maskerine said the nine department members who served as officials as well as the station crew who were on standby for medical assistance were happy to help and to have the competition in Thompson.



Competitors and officials pose at the Manitoba First Nations Firefighters competition in Thompson Aug. 1. - Ivan Hart

"We met some firefighters that we never met before from down south and up north," said Maskerine. "By the middle of the competition it was like one big family having fun. We had a heck of a good time."

No matter where they're from, said Maskerine, firefighters share a common bond.

"We're all doing the same job, sometimes with a little less equipment," he said.

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/cross-lake-finishes-on-top-at-first-nations-firefighter-competition-1.2022624#sthash.MsMaf2OM.dpuf>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Kelowna camp offers programming for Indigenous youth engagement

IndigenEYEZ invites teens from seven First Nations to participate in arts and dialogue

By Daybreak South, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 10, 2015 8:00 PM PT Last Updated: Aug 10, 2015 8:00 PM PT



Youth who participate in the camp have the opportunity to discuss their history, culture and future goals with elders and mentors in this 5-day program. (Kelly Terbasket)

First Nations youth from around the province will participate at [Camp IndigenEYEZ](#) at Camp Dunlop in Kelowna this week in a program designed to empower them through art, music, dance and dialogue.

Camp manager Kelly Terbasket has organized 70 young people from seven different First Nations to take part in the program this year.

"Youth get the experience of using the arts to express themselves and come together over five days and build a community of support and encouragement," Terbasket told Daybreak South.

The purpose of the program, according to Terbasket, is to transform and empower communities, while "overcoming the history of the impacts of colonization and fragmentation of what has happened in our communities due to residential schools and some of the things of our recent past," she said.

Lateral violence is one of the issues that this programs hopes to tackle.



Campers will participate in group activities designed to enforce community bonds. (Kelly Terbasket)

"Lateral violence is where we cut each other down, we don't support each other in what we're trying to do," Terbasket says.

"It's like the metaphor of crabs in a bucket...where someone is trying to do something good and get out of the cycle of violence or addiction and the other people are uncomfortable with that so they pull each other down."

How art helps

The camp programming is designed using the Creative Community Model, developed by [Partners for Youth Engagement](#) who have used this model for over 20 years all over the world.



Terbasket says that the IndigenEYEZ program at Camp Dunlop is the perfect tool to engage the youth of First Nations communities. (IndigenEYEZ)

"They [the founders] have brought it to British Columbia to share with First Nations people, so there is proven record of success," Terbasket says.

Terbasket has worked for her whole career within the community development sector and has seen first hand how the arts can empower youth by allowing them to express themselves.

"It [the program] helps us to learn how to communicate respectfully, with compassion and empathy and how to lift each other up and support each other," she says.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/kelowna-camp-offers-programming-for-indigenous-youth-engagement-1.3186193>

International students learn aboriginal perspective on Canadian history

U of S program Building Bridges allows international and aboriginal students to learn about culture

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 12, 2015 9:40 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 12, 2015 9:40 AM CT



About a dozen students participate in an activity at Monday night's Building Bridges events at the U of S. (Don Somers/CBC News)

About a dozen aboriginal and international students gathered at the University of Saskatchewan Monday night to learn about each other's cultures.

The Aboriginal Student Centre along with the International Student Centre hosted a potluck where immigrant students were able to learn a different perspective on Canada.

Janelle Pewapsconias works at the Aboriginal Student Centre and helped create the program, called Building Bridges.

"What I would love to see is people have a different and deeper understanding to Canada, to the history of this place, she said. "I can speak from personal experience that I know indigenous people maybe have misconceptions about newcomer folks as well as newcomer folks having misconceptions about indigenous folks."

Jebunnessa Chapola, a graduate student at the U of S, said she knew little about aboriginal culture when she arrived, but believes it's important to learn.

"There are a lot of misconceptions about Canadian history and aboriginal people and as an immigrant woman I had a feeling that we need to learn more about aboriginal history," she said.

The potluck was just one of many events hosting by Building Bridges throughout the year.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/international-students-learn-aboriginal-perspective-on-canadian-history-1.3188337>

Teach for Canada recruits 31 teachers for 7 northern Ontario First Nations

Intensive month-long teacher training camp wraps up in Thunder Bay this week

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 12, 2015 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Aug 12, 2015 1:13 PM ET



Roxanne Martin takes part in a sharing circle at the Teach for Canada summer enrichment program for teachers in Thunder Bay. Martin was hired by Lac Seul First Nation. (Kevin Chung/Teach for Canada)

Teach for Canada, a non-profit organization, is preparing dozens of teachers for life and work in northern Ontario First Nations this fall.

The organization partnered with seven First Nations to recruit teachers for their elementary schools. More than 300 applied and through a series of interviews, 31 were hired, said Teach for Canada executive director Kyle Hill.



Kyle Hill, the executive director of Teach for Canada, speaks at the first ever summer enrichment program, preparing teachers for life and work in remote First Nations.

First Nations education directors and experienced northern teachers say teachers need more preparation before heading into isolated communities, he said.

"For teachers teaching in First Nations communities, it's so important to know the history and to know a bit about the culture and to know what to expect, so that they can adapt," Hill said.

A four-week Teach for Canada "summer enrichment program" wraps up on Friday. The training included sessions on the role of culture in education, indigenous perspectives, community engagement as well as mental well-being and self-care in isolated communities.

A five-day trip to Lac Seul First Nation introduced teachers to life on an isolated reserve.

'I don't think we could find it anywhere else'

It's where Roxanne Martin will begin teaching in September. She said the training and the bonding with fellow teachers makes her feel confident about the work ahead.

"Knowing that we have such a great support system, where together we're able to talk about ways to improve our teaching, but also using the cultural aspect and incorporating First Nations culture into our teaching is great," she said. "I don't think we could find it anywhere else."

Martin, who is Anishinaabe, grew up in Toronto, not knowing much about her cultural identity. She said she welcomes the opportunity to bring her son to Lac Seul where he'll attend the same school where she'll be teaching.

"It's nice knowing that he's going to be surrounded by the culture and the language and he can grow up knowing that that's who he is," she said. "That's something I never had. I'm trying to create a legacy for him."



Erika Edmiston says she was thrilled with the chance to meet some of her students and see the classroom where she'll be teaching in Lac Seul First Nation this fall. (Kevin Chung/Teach for Canada)

Erika Edmiston is also heading to Lac Seul and said the visit to the community was really helpful.

"We got to see our classrooms, our schools, our houses and I even got to meet some of my students so that was really exciting," she said. "We got to meet different community members and start forming relationships, so it was really incredible."

Teacher couples in demand

Edmiston said she feels fortunate that her partner also got a job in Lac Seul, so he'll be around to help with any loneliness that might set in so far from home.

Recruiting couples was a key part of satisfying the unique needs of First Nations, Hill said.

"Some communities said we only want couples in our community because we have a housing shortage, and a couple only takes one bedroom in a teacherage," Hill said. "Another community said, 'we need male teachers, we don't have enough male role models, especially in the younger grades.'"



Brenton Inglis says he's looking forward to playing and coaching hockey, as well as teaching in Deer Lake First Nation this fall. (Kevin Chung/Teach for Canada)

One of those male teachers is Brenton Inglis, who got a job in Deer Lake First Nation. He said he's looking forward to becoming a part of the community, beyond the school.

"Maybe I end up playing hockey on a Tuesday night with parents and one might come up to me and say 'hey Johnny's really enjoying your classes, why don't you come over and watch the Leaf game tonight,'" he said.

Inglis, who taught overseas, said he wanted to put his skills to use at home in Canada "to do something that was purposeful and fulfilling," he said.

Teach for Canada fits that desire through its mission "to create an equal playing ground for students all over Canada," he said.

The organization is already gearing up for its next round of recruiting. Hill says several more First Nations are asking to partner with Teach for Canada to hire teachers for next fall.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/teach-for-canada-recruits-31-teachers-for-7-northern-ontario-first-nations-1.3187536>

UNBC adds First Nations programs

Citizen staff / Prince George Citizen
August 11, 2015 09:15 PM



The University of Northern B.C. is offering two new First Nations studies programs in two of its regional campuses starting this fall.

Offered at both the Terrace and Quesnel campuses, the Bachelor of Arts in First Nations Studies and a Certificate in General First Nations Studies prepares graduates to work in a number of fields, the release said.

That includes work in band and tribal council administration, traditional use researcher, cultural affairs officer, or multiculturalism educator.

In a statement, UNBC's president said it shows the university's commitment to the region.

"Students enrolled in First Nations Studies programming gain the knowledge they need to become leaders in their communities," Weeks said.

It also means students in the area have more educational options closer to home, said Mark Dale, UNBC's dean of regional programming.

"The joint-delivery model allows students to access the expertise of faculty members located throughout UNBC's campus network."

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/unbc-adds-first-nations-programs-1.2027955#sthash.13nnKuHL.dpuf>

Trudeau vows to invest in First Nations education



CTVNews.ca Staff

Published Thursday, August 13, 2015 2:19PM EDT

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Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau is promising \$2.6-billion of new funding over four years that he says would help close the funding gap that separates First Nations children from other kids.

First Nations students, whose education is funded federally, get far less per capita than students in provincial systems, he said in a speech to supporters in Saskatoon.

"As a result, First Nations students are falling behind in reading, writing and numeracy, and less than half of all first nations students on reserves graduate from high school," he said.



Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau speaks to supporters during a 2015 federal election campaign stop in Saskatoon, Sask., on Thursday, August 13, 2015. (Liam Richards / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

“Canadians know that’s just not right.”

Trudeau is promising an immediate new investment of \$515 million per year in core annual funding for First Nations kids in Kindergarten through Grade 12. That would rise to over \$750 million per year by the end of a Liberal government’s first term.

The Liberals are also promising a new investment of \$500 million over the next three years for First Nations education infrastructure.

On top of that, they say they would make another \$50 million available for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), which provides financial assistance to Indigenous students in post-secondary education.

Trudeau also promised “substantial new funding to support the ability of First Nations to promote, preserve and enhance their languages and cultures.”

“Knowledge of one’s language is directly related to better physical, mental and spiritual health,” he said.

Trudeau emphasized that First Nations people would be put in control of their education, instead of having it directed by Ottawa.

The Liberal leader also said that he would invest in areas beyond education, after engaging in a “nation-to-nation dialogue,” similar to that which led to the Kelowna Accord.

The Kelowna Accord was an agreement made in 2005 between Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin and indigenous communities that included a commitment to spend \$5 billion over five years on aboriginal health, education, housing and more.

Stephen Harper’s Conservatives took control of the government in 2006 and have not fully implemented the previous government’s funding promises.

Trudeau said he was committed to “immediately reengage in a renewed, respectful and inclusive nation-to-nation Kelowna process,” because he believes “the best education system in the world means nothing if you don’t have safe drinking water or a safe place to live.”

Among the things he expects on the agenda would be issues like housing, infrastructure, health and mental health care, community safety, policing and child welfare, he said.

Asked how he would pay for the new spending, Trudeau said that leaving young people “out of Canada’s success” hurts the economy.

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance and see how expensive that is,” he said.

When pressed again on how he would pay for the plan, Trudeau said, “the Liberal party is committed to balance the budget (but) how long it takes to do that depends on the size of the mess Mr. Harper has left behind.”

Trudeau also pointed out that he would raise taxes for the “wealthiest one per cent” and stop sending child care benefit cheques “to millionaires.”

‘A better plan,’ says AFN leader

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde said he will work with whoever is elected on Oct. 19, but so far the Liberals’ announcement is “a better plan” than what the Conservatives have proposed.

Bellegarde said a “bilateral process” would be needed to “make sure that they get their numbers right,” but that “right now the Liberals have a better plan because the monies are immediately accessible and it’s not tied into any legislation.”

The Conservatives’ proposed First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act was unsupported by chiefs because it was “unilaterally imposed” and “didn’t speak to Indian control of Indian education,” according to Bellegarde.

“I would encourage the other parties as well to make similar commitments and similar announcements,” he added.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/election/trudeau-vows-to-invest-in-first-nations-education-1.2515569>

Cape Breton First Nations teens learn surfing and life saving skills

About 40 young people from the area’s five First Nation’s communities are participating

By Joan Weeks, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 13, 2015 5:39 PM AT Last Updated: Aug 13, 2015 5:39 PM AT



Ciana Julian from Eskasoni says before the program she was shy. (CBC)

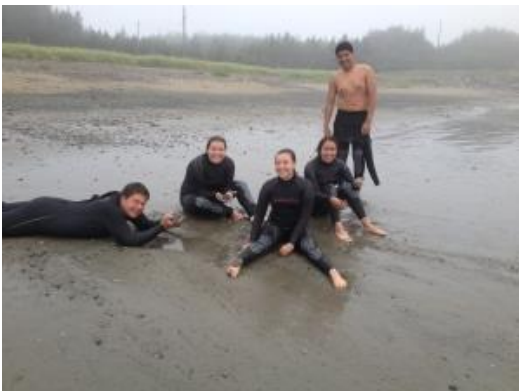
Dozens of surfers appeared through the fog at Point Michaud beach, in Cape Breton, Thursday as they learned to ride the big waves.

Between the ages of 13 and 17-years-old, most of them are first time surfers.

About 40 young people from the area's five First Nation's communities are "hanging out" and "hanging 10".

Jeannine Denny, of Eskasoni, is one of the organizers of the Learn to Surf program. She says, the students are gaining confidence and leadership skills.

"Oh I see them as leaders," she says. "And the thing is, they have such high potential to become anything they want. You know, not only do they receive the surf skills and the surf instructions, they receive their life saving skills, first-aid and it just ties in with everything."



Between the ages of 13 and 17-years-old, most of them are first time surfers. (CBC)

Many of the young surfers say, if they weren't here at Point Michaud, they would most likely be partying or sitting around being bored and playing video games.

Fifteen year old Devon Bernard from Waycobah is enjoying being with people who share his interests.

"Like I'm a sober guy, active. It's a fun thing to do," he said.

Nichelle GooGoo from Waycobah is 17-years-old and has other reasons for taking part.

"No words can actually describe how much fun it is," she said. "Like I'm diabetic also so this is a great exercise for me."

Ciana Julian from Eskasoni, started surfing last summer. The 16-year-old has seen a change in herself since starting.

"It feels amazing. You feel like you've achieved something," she said. "Last year I fell a few times before catching my first wave so now this year I can do it better. I love it. Before the program I was really shy and now I'm trying to socialize more."

Denny says there was a lot of demand for the program from all five communities and says they hope to continue the program next year.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/cape-breton-first-nations-teens-learn-surfing-and-life-saving-skills-1.3190310>

Aboriginal Health

Despite new health services, medevacs continue to climb in Cree communities

Almost 10,000 scheduled medevacs annually, for total population of under 20,000

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 07, 2015 2:37 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 07, 2015 2:37 PM CT



Bella Moses Petawabano, chairperson of the Cree Health Board, says that medevacs are steadily rising in Cree communities, even as local health services improve. (Jaime Little/CBC)

Despite new telehealth services that allow Cree patients to undergo certain medical procedures in their home clinics, more Cree are travelling south for medical treatment every year.

"The work goes up 10% every year" for the department dealing with medical travel, said Cree Health Board Chairperson Bella Petawabano this week at the Cree Nation Government's annual general assembly in Ouje-Bougoumou, northern Québec.

"We have almost 10,000 emergency and scheduled medevacs per year" — in a total population of almost 20,000 people.

Procedures such as ultrasounds, dialysis and eye exams are now available in some Cree communities, but many other services require patients to travel several hundred kilometres to southern centres.

Petawabano said addressing the root causes of obesity and diabetes is urgent. She encouraged people to get active and "just say no to poutine," one of the most popular snacks in the Cree communities.

"In the past, people knew what was good for them," she said. "They knew how to eat well and that made them strong. It's not like that today."

The annual assembly wrapped up on Thursday.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/despite-new-health-services-medevacs-continue-to-climb-in-cree-communities-1.3183776>

The challenge of bringing health care services to remote First Nations communities

Sharaz Khan

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2015 5:00AM EDT

Last updated Monday, Aug. 10, 2015 4:46PM EDT

The Challenge When Laurie Ducharme took over as director of operations at the [Four Arrows Regional Health Authority](#) in 2005, she had a vision to change health care in the First Nations Island Lake communities of Garden Hill, Wasagamack, Red Sucker Lake and St. Theresa Point in northern Manitoba that are collectively known as Four Arrows.

In 2011, health officials were unable to categorize nearly 52 per cent of deaths in the Island Lake community because of a lack of facilities to document them. Statistics from 2012 indicate that premature deaths, digestive disorders, respiratory infection, teenage pregnancy and mortality rates were higher for Island Lake people than Manitobans in general.

Ms. Ducharme said she knew the community needed a primary-care centre, a 21st century nursing station and public health projects from diabetes care to immunization.

The Background Ms. Ducharme was born in Sioux Lookout, Ont., and is a member of the St. Theresa Point First Nation. She says she learned leadership skills from her mentor, friend and father, Ed Wood, who managed infrastructure programs for First Nations. She watched how he bridged the corporate world and First Nation communities, and from him learned the benefits of active listening, creating flattened hierarchies, promoting strong inter-cultural teamwork and using passion to drive work.

She said his example taught her the importance of strong stakeholder engagement, and that if important changes were to occur, she must work closely with members of the community.

“Management by grassroots connections really helps you be more visible, connect with employees, share ideas and invite suggestions for doing things better,” Ms. Ducharme said.

She manages a health-care team of 16 in Winnipeg that is responsible for health care in Island Lake. Ms. Ducharme said her goal was to establish accessible health programs and services, allocate funds according to the priorities of community members and ensure public health and safety was maintained through mandatory health programs.

The Solution Ms. Ducharme said she knew she needed to get partners and key stakeholders in the community to have common goals. She chose to do this through a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Partners and key stakeholders in the MOU included the Four Island Lake communities’ chiefs, council and health directors, the board of the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, provincial health agencies, the Assembly of First Nations, First Nation and Inuit Health (Manitoba and National), and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Ms. Ducharme said she encountered resistance or ambivalence and goals that competed with those of the project, but met with the stakeholders separately and in groups and prepared responses to their concerns.

The memorandum states shared goals to co-operate on strategies to achieve improvements, and to identify the communities’ needs. It became the first step towards improving health care conditions collectively and establishing programs and projects for long-term sustainability of access to health care services.

The Results The MOU was key to the development of four health initiatives lead by Ms. Ducharme.

Island Lake Regional Primary Care Centre Hospital Four Arrows developed a joint health governance group comprised of representatives of the four communities, Manitoba Health, and First Nation and Inuit Health to develop a master plan. A site for the hospital has been approved and funding is being sought through public private partnerships.

Manitoba First Nation Public Health Improvement Pilot Project The Four Arrows is participating in a five-year pilot project funded at the national level by Health Canada to develop strategies for improving public-health services to First Nations. One strategy in Island Lake was an immunization program. The immunization rate has increased by 20 per cent since 2006 and has increased immunities to infectious diseases over the past five years.

Diabetes Integration Project The Integrated Diabetes Health Care Service Delivery is a mobile diabetes care and treatment services model. In the Island Lake communities, its goals are kidney-disease prevention and early diabetes detection in individuals, a sustainable platform for comprehensive kidney care unique to First Nations people, and reducing the need for dialysis in Manitoba.

A 21st-century digital nursing station The digital nursing station will be connected to the provincial and federal health care systems and it will mean faster and accurate patient care information for doctors and nurses. This turns into faster care and referrals for the patient. It can also identify and monitor patients and therefore improve the overall quality of care for patients in the community.

Ms. Ducharme is continuing to work with stakeholders on developing the hospital, which would include facilities for dialysis, lab and x-rays, a birthing centre and provide medical treatment 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Sharaz Khan is an Instructor of Business Technologies at the Haskayne School of Business.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-managing/the-challenge-of-bringing-health-care-services-to-remote-first-nations-communities/article25872309/>

People living longer with HIV, but First Nations, drug users, women with disease lag behind

Those with HIV are living about 16 years longer than they did in 2000



A new study shows Canadians being treated for HIV can expect to live longer. But some groups are lagging behind.

"The differences are between men and women, those that have a history of injection drug use and those that don't, and then First Nations people as a whole," said Dr. Robert Hogg, lead researcher of the study from the Canadian Observational Cohort Collaboration.

Hogg, a senior scientist at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, said the study concluded that people with HIV, on average are living 16 years longer than they did in 2000.

However, women are living seven years fewer than men. And the difference for those with First Nations ancestry was also significant.

Hogg said it shows that a national strategy is needed to expand access to anti-retroviral drugs.

"It says that we still have a long way to go in terms of reducing the gap between these different populations."

Increased testing and earlier treatment are two practices that would help, said Hogg.

The study is an ongoing look at the health of 10,000 people with HIV and AIDS living in B.C., Ontario and Quebec.

Hogg said the study will soon cover people living in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador. He said that this helps us get a better understanding of how we might improve the situation for people with HIV in Regina and Saskatoon.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/people-living-longer-with-hiv-but-first-nations-drug-users-women-with-disease-lag-behind-1.3186573>

Indigenous man credits powwow for helping step away from addictions

Gabriel Whiteduck shares his story through song and dance

By Terrence Duff and Corinne Smith, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 11, 2015 7:00 AM ET
Last Updated: Aug 11, 2015 4:39 PM ET



Gabriel Whiteduck shares his experience with First Nations youth through workshops. (Supplied)

Gabriel Whiteduck has been sober for seven years, and credits his passion for song and dance and traditional teachings for helping him heal from addiction. Powwow culture was a means for positive expression, at a time in his life when his outlook was dark.

"When I first came into powwow, I was suffering from addictions - drugs and alcohol," said the 33-year old, in a recent interview with the Cree Radio CBC.

"It was a way to put that down and take up something. I picked up the drum and dancing, I was able to really apply myself positively."

Whiteduck is a powwow teacher, dancer, drummer and singer. Algonquin and Plains Cree, he's originally from Prince Albert, Sask., and is now based in the Algonquin First Nation of Kitigan Zibi, Que.



Gabriel Whiteduck dances traditional men's style. (Supplied)

For Whiteduck, powwow culture has been a powerful force of change in his life. While becoming a father was a defining turning point in his adult life, he credits powwow dancing and drumming as a source of renewal.

He wants to share that personal experience with other First Nations youth, through his workshops and teachings.

"The odds are against our young Native men and women, unfortunately," he said.

"My story is a celebration. I really celebrate that gift that was given to me, that was given to us, the gift of being able to move and speak freely."

He started travelling in the James Bay area of Northern Quebec a few years ago, visiting communities to lead powwow workshops and attend gatherings. Last summer he took part in the first ever powwow in Ouje-Bougoumou, a predominantly Christian Cree community that has in the past resisted that kind of gathering.

Cultural identity

Powwows don't have the same long history in Eeyou Istchee as they do for other First Nations, but the practise is spreading fast. Whiteduck believes it's important for people to remember that they have a distinct aboriginal cultural identity, whether or not they participate in powwows.

As "intertribal events" they simply add another dimension to First Nations cultural expression, he said. "It's a subculture underneath who we already are."

Whiteduck says when he visits communities, he's not there to tell people how to be Aboriginal. But he believes the powwow is a way to express your culture.

"I was once a person like that, I was very shy and nervous and I think about those people in the audience, so when I dance I try to give some of my confidence off towards them as much as I can," - *Gabriel Whiteduck, powwow dancer*

He dances and teaches traditional men's dancing, but says everyone's style is very personal. What he keeps in mind in the powwow circle is to connect and relate to his audience.

"I like to dance for the people that are watching, the people that feel they have barriers, they want to dance but they have the confidence or the courage to get up and dance," he said.

"I was once a person like that, I was very shy and nervous and I think about those people in the audience, so when I dance I try to give some of my confidence off towards them as much as I can."

Whiteduck says it's very important to encourage youth to find a way to express themselves and tell their story, and he hopes powwow culture is one means to do that.

He wants to meet more youth and encourage them to bring their own songs and stories, of their lives and the land, to his workshops.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/indigenous-man-credits-powwow-for-helping-step-away-from-addictions-1.3185959>

Marijuana users in Nunavik thinner, with less diabetes: study

Co-author Michel Lucas says hunger may be a factor

Natasha MacDonald-Dupuis [CBC News](#)

Posted: Aug 13, 2015 8:15 AM CT

Last Updated: Aug 13, 2015 8:41 AM CT



Researchers from Quebec looked into why levels of Type 2 diabetes were so low among Inuit, and the results took them by surprise. 'People who smoked marijuana had lower [body mass index], lower amounts of fat on their bodies, and two-times lower risk of being obese.'

Forget about weight watchers; new research out of Nunavik suggests the secret to a slim figure might be... marijuana.

Recently, researchers from Quebec looked into why levels of Type 2 diabetes were so low among Inuit.



Dr Michel Lucas is one of the co-authors of a study linking low body weight and marijuana use in Nunavik. (CBC)

The study, called "Cannabis use in relation to obesity and insulin resistance in the Inuit population," analysed health data from 786 adults in Nunavik, and the results took them by surprise.

"People who smoked marijuana had lower [body mass index], lower amounts of fat on their bodies, and two-times lower risk of being obese," said co-author Michel Lucas, an epidemiologist at CHU de Québec Research Center.

He says that because marijuana users had lower BMI, they were less resistant to insulin, therefore less at risk for diabetes.

Lucas believes food insecurity in Nunavik might have influenced the results.

"When you suffer from hunger, you could try to use these substances to stop thinking about food."

3 in 5 people smoke pot

The population under scrutiny may be unique in other ways.



Kim MacNearney, an activist from Yellowknife, says Northerners should have access to medical marijuana. (submitted by Kim MacNearney)

Almost 60 per cent of respondents, or three people out of five, said that they were marijuana users.

"When we look at the Northern population, it's very young, and we know that the marijuana smoking prevalence is higher amongst youth," he said.

Some activists believe Northerners should have access to marijuana. They say it could decrease alcohol abuse, and help treat chronic illnesses where access to health care is limited.

Unlike Dr. Lucas, Kim MacNearney, an activist based in Yellowknife, says she's not surprised by these new findings.

"On a cellular level, our bodies have a whole bunch of receptors that are designed to receive cannabinoids. So it didn't surprise me at all that it would impact our metabolisms and insulin intake," she said.

Dr. Lucas is quick to point out, however, that despite his findings he does not endorse the use of marijuana.

"If you look at the literature, it seems clear that the adverse effects of marijuana outweigh the benefits," he said.

We might not see marijuana weight loss pills on the market anytime soon, but MacNearney says that more studies like this one are coming out every day.

The study was published in the journal *Obesity*.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/canada/montreal/story/1.3189703>

Aboriginal History

400 years ago, Champlain's first European contact with First Nations in Georgian Bay met sound society

Aug 12, 2015

by Alicia McCutcheon with files from Shelley Pearen

SWIFT CURRENT— It was 400 years ago, August 1, 1615, that famed French explorer Samuel de Champlain travelled the waters near Manitoulin Island, likely setting foot on land near Swift Current (at the LaCloche causeway on present-day Highway 6) and meeting with local First Nations people as he became the first explorer to tour the Great Lakes region.

The following is an excerpt from Champlain's diary 'Voyages et découvertures faites en la Nouvelle France depuis l'annee 1615' and printed in 1870 by Desbarats (and translated by historian Shelley J. Pearen).

"After spending two days with the chief they call Nipisierinig: we re-embarked in our canoes and entered a river by which this lake discharges and were some 35 leagues, and descending several rapids, as much by land as by water, to lake Attigouautan. This country was more disagreeable than the previous, for there was barely ten acres of workable land, rocks and mountainous region. It's true that near the lake the Attigouautan found "bleds d'Inde" [villages = bleds, but more likely means ble = corn], but in small quantities; where our Natives were taking pumpkins which seemed good to us, for our provisions were starting to be lacking from feeding the Natives who ate so well at the beginning, that at the end little remained, having only one meal a day. It's true as I've said above, that the blueberries and strawberries were not lacking, as formerly we had been in danger of having them out of necessity."



Samuel de Champlain spent much time writing descriptions of the territory and peoples he encountered, including those he met in Georgian Bay. He was also a maker of maps, as seen above. The lake title La Mer Duce is his idea of Georgian Bay, not realizing there was a much larger Lake Huron and within it, Manitoulin Island. His maps and writings provide us with an understanding of where he travelled and how he interpreted the places he visited and people he met.

“We met 300 men of a nation that we have named the cheveux relevez, for having raised and constructed, and better coiffured hair than our courtesans, and having no comparison, some irons and way that they could supply them. They have on way to “brayer” and make strong cutting by the body in several ways to compartments. They paint their faces in diverse colours, have pierced nostrils and ears edged with patinostres. When they leave their houses, they carry a club i.e. they visit and familiarize rarely and make friends with them. I gave an axe to their chief, who was satisfied that I had given such a good present and communicated with him, I asked him about his country. He drew with charcoal on bark from a tree. He told me that they came to this place to dry this fruit called blueberries for the winter but they had not found any. A.C. showed the way that they arm themselves going to war. All they have is the bow and arrow, but it is made in a way that “voyer depainte” that they usually carry and a rondache of boiled skin, which is from an animal like the buffalo.”

“The next day we departed and continued on our way the length of the shore of this lake of the Attigouautan, where there are a large number of islands, and about 4.5 leagues, along this lake. It is very large and about 400 leagues long from east to west, and 50 leagues, I’ve named it La Mer Douce (present-day Georgian Bay). It is abundant is several species of very good fish, some we have, some we don’t, and principally trout which are monstrously large...”

According to the Ontario Heritage Trust, on April 24, 1615, Champlain, Captain Pont Gravé and four Récollet fathers departed for New France aboard the Saint-Étienne. They arrived at Tadoussac on the St. Lawrence River near the end of May and continued on to present-day Quebec City. There, Champlain quickly dispatched orders to the habitants and continued up the St. Lawrence to the Rivière des Prairies, where he was greeted by a large group of aboriginal people, including members of the Huron (Wendat) and Algonquin (Anishinabe) nations. They asked Champlain to assist them in their campaign

against the Onondaga and Oneida nations, which posed a constant threat to fur trade routes along the upper St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers.

Having agreed to participate in the campaign, Champlain hurried back to Quebec to make the necessary arrangements. He was late meeting his aboriginal allies at their agreed-on location but continued regardless, travelling first up the Rivière des Prairies and then along the Ottawa River to Morrison Island. His party then travelled to the Mattawa River and across it and other waterways to today's Lake Nipissing. Throughout his travels, Champlain met with a number of aboriginal nations and worked to promote alliances with the French. After meeting with the Nipissing nation, he travelled along the French River into Lake Huron and finally southwards across Georgian Bay to a site near present-day Penetanguishene.

Champlain spent much time exploring Huronia (the present-day Midland-Penetang area) and visited a number of the villages of the Huron confederacy, including Carhagouha, recording his observations and impressions as he went.

It was Champlain's extensive record-keeping that drew Anishnaabe historian and Wikwemikong Director of Education Dominc Beaudry to him.

"He met the Odawa at the mouth of the French River, probably on August 1, 400 years ago," Mr. Beaudry explained.

While researching documents at the University of Toronto archives, Mr. Beaudry said he was interested to find that in some letter to France he would write about the poor conditions of the First Nations people, asking for more money to better their life, while a mere two paragraphs later he was remarking on the two leagues (six miles) of corn planted and a mile-and-a-half of potatoes at the First Nations community of between 250 and 300 people where modern-day Cobden, Ontario (near present day Petawawa) stands today.

"That's a lot more than they consume, which leads me to believe that there was a strong, economic community (among the tribes)," he said. "Champlain created a clear economic picture of who the First Nations really were—quite an involved agriculture community to the Great Lakes region, and that's 400 years ago."

Yet, he said, ironically in 1890 the Canadian government decided the First Nations people of the same region Champlain had explored needed to be civilized and learn how to become good farmers and work the soil.

"For a lot of us living in the Great Lakes region there is lots to learn," Mr. Beaudry continued. "We are all Canadian and when we write Canadian history we need to make that right." The "bits and pieces" Champlain provided in his writings paint a picture of a proud and healthy people who drove a healthy economy "and First Nations people today should take a lot of pride in the fact that their ancestors would work the land and fisheries."

“We talk about reconciliation, but one needs to understand that First Nations had an affect on the Europeans too,” Mr. Beaudry added, noting that one of the driving factors behind the success of the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe is the fact that, by that time, Western Europe had become a modern agrarian society planting the muss-free crops of wheat, rice, corn and potatoes (introduced by North America’s indigenous peoples) which meant more time for industry, and change.

“Despite the negative impacts, it is part of our history and his writings are a positive for those who seek to make a new history,” Mr. Beaudry concluded.

- See more at: <http://www.manitoulin.ca/2015/08/12/400-years-ago-champlains-first-european-contact-with-first-nations-in-georgian-bay-met-sound-society/#sthash.BXmYu6bJ.dpuf>

New Film to Tell Shared History of B.C. First Nations and Chinese Canadians

August 12, 2015 by [Stacy Penner](#)

A documentary aiming to bring a new perspective to B.C.’s history is getting provincial funding to educate and inspire a bigger audience.

All Our Father’s Relations will tell the story of a mixed Musqueam and Chinese family, showing the shared history and reciprocal relationships between First Nations and Chinese Canadian. The film will follow four Musqueam elder siblings—Gordon Grant, Larry Grant, Helen Callbreath, and Howard E. Grant—whose father Hong Tim Hing came from Guangdong, China in search of work in Vancouver.

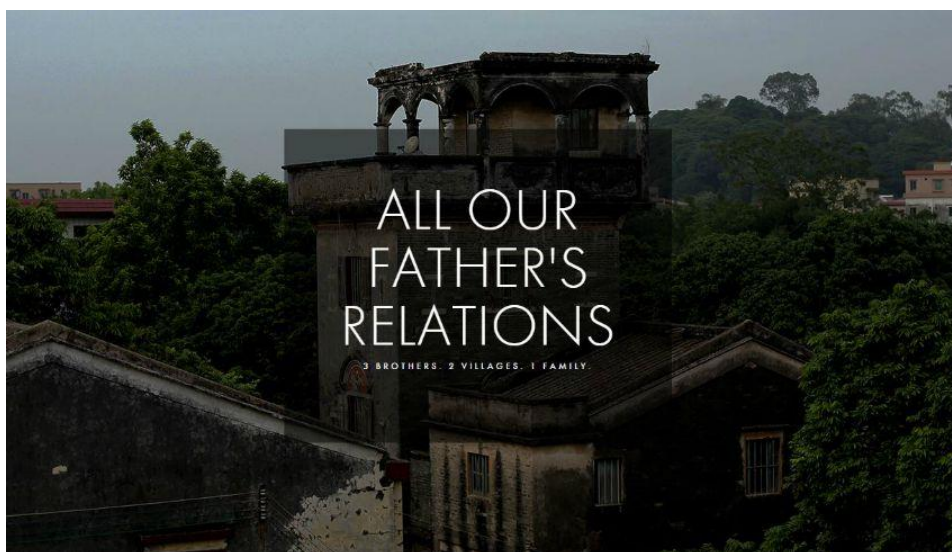


Photo Credit: [All Our Father's Relations](#)

The documentary will retrace the father's steps to his ancestral village of Sei Moon, Guangdong, which he left in the 1920s before he married Agnes Grant of the Musqueam Nation. The siblings will reflect on growing up on their family's market garden at Musqueam Indian Reserve 2 and the different government factors that shaped their lives. For example, the filmmakers say that the Indian Act stopped the siblings' father from legally living with their mother.

The Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia will receive \$20,000 from the provincial government to help complete the film.

"The story of the Chinese farms on Musqueam territory is a significant part of our community's history, and we recognize the importance of the reciprocal relationships of sharing that they represent," said Chief Wayne Sparrow of the Musqueam Indian Band. "When we first welcomed the Chinese to Musqueam, they came to us with respect and a desire for a long-term relationship. We are happy to see that again today and hope that this history will serve as a lesson for us now and in the future."

This film will show the interconnected histories of Chinese Canadians and First Nations along the Fraser River, explaining the Musqueam's rich history of Chinese market gardening and giving a new perspective to the history of First Nations and early Chinese pioneers in B.C.

Filming for the project began in 2013, and the documentary will be at least 44 minutes. *All Our Father's Relations* will be produced in English with Chinese subtitles, and it's expected to be submitted to film festivals across North America.

Direct Link:

https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/15/08/12/New_Film_to_Tell_Shared_History_of_B_C_First_Nations_and_Chinese_Canadians

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

ITK gears up for Iqaluit language summit

Cross-country consultations show Inuit favour Roman orthography

SARAH ROGERS, August 12, 2015 - 4:03 pm

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's language task force will host a summit in Iqaluit later this month to try and set the groundwork for a unified Inuktitut writing system in Canada. (FILE PHOTO)

Members of a national Inuktitut language task group will sit down together to hash out a plan for a written language system at an upcoming summit in Iqaluit.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's Autausiq Inuktitut Titirauisq task group will host a summit called the Unification of the Inuit Writing Language System Aug. 25 and Aug. 26 at Iqaluit's parish hall, ITK announced Aug. 12.

At the gathering members of the task group plan to share their findings from a series of consultations in recent months that visited communities in all four regions of Inuit Nunangat, with the goal of drafting recommendations for provincial, territorial and Inuit governments.

"From the consultations, there seems to be a lean towards Roman orthography," said Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, who heads Autausiq Inuktitut Titirauisq. "But that will be determined at the summit."

Most recently, the task force visited Rankin Inlet and Kugluktuk in Nunavut, followed by stops in the Nunavik communities of Puvirnituk and Kuujuaq.

"Those regions are mainly syllabic users, and there was quite a lot of questions about syllabics being omitted and how it impact language use," Palluq-Cloutier said.

"But we told them that the regions can continue to use the language systems they feel comfortable with."

Any recommended changes towards a unified Inuktitut written system would be gradually introduced into the education systems of each jurisdiction, she explained.

"So it won't impact the general population immediately," Palluq-Cloutier said. "People will continue to speak the languages they speak, and people will continue to use the writing systems they're comfortable with."

The eight-member Autausiq Inuktitut Titirauisq, made up of language experts representing each Inuit region, have been working on the direction of ITK's Amauraq Centre for Inuit Education since 2012.

[The group has hosted consultations in more than a dozen communities over the last year,](#) meeting with teachers, elders, translators and others about specific changes in orthography and spelling that could help Canadian Inuit move towards a more standardized writing system.

Linguists have largely recommended that the group look to majority usage when trying to standardize certain elements of the written Inuit language. For example, the "ch" sound is used in the Inuvialuit region, although it's written and pronounced as "ts" elsewhere.

Linguists would recommend the use of “ts” as the new standard, reports the task force, while the Inuvialuit could continue to pronounce the “ch” sound.

Four different versions of syllabics are used between eastern Nunavut and Nunavik while overall, there are 10 variations in the way the Inuit language is written across the Inuit Nunangat regions of Canada.

Once Inuit understand that, task force members said everyone generally sees the need for a more unified system.

The Aug. 25 and Aug. 26 summit is not open to the public, but rather will welcome a number of delegates from each of the four Inuit regions in Canada, as well as delegates from Greenland and Alaska.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674itk_gears_up_for_iqaluit_language_summit/

Aboriginal Politics

Inside the aboriginal vote in Alberta

Racism cited as biggest barrier in attracting indigenous candidates

By Trisha Estabrooks, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 07, 2015 6:00 AM MT Last Updated: Aug 07, 2015 6:00 AM MT



Aretha Greatrix, is seeking the NDP nomination in Edmonton-St. Albert. (CBC)

The solution to getting more aboriginal voters in Canadian elections is simple, say both political pundits and candidates — have more aboriginal people on the ballot.

So far, Alberta has two officially nominated candidates who are aboriginal, with at least two more aboriginal candidates seeking nominations:

- Aaron Paquette NDP candidate for Edmonton-Manning
- Cameron Alexis, NDP candidate for Peace River-Westlock
- Katherine Swampy, NDP, seeking nomination for Red Deer- Lacombe
- Aretha Greatrix, NDP, seeking nomination Edmonton-St. Albert

Across the country, there are 34 aboriginal candidates, [up slightly from the 31 who ran in 2011](#). However, this number could still rise because the deadline for nominations isn't until September 28, 2015.

In his 2011 report, Peter Loewen, an associate professor of political science at the University of Toronto, looked into the reasons why aboriginal turnout was low in the last federal election. He found the reasons aboriginal people don't vote tend to be same for other Canadians; age, lower income and lower education levels.

"Finally, we find that Aboriginals, like non-Aboriginals, are more likely to vote when they have more political resources (i.e. political knowledge and information) and a greater sense of civic duty," he wrote.



A glimpse of aboriginal candidates across the country and the parties they are running for. (CBC)

But Loewen said the candidates themselves were also an important factor.

"When aboriginal candidates run, it motivates more aboriginals to vote because they know there's someone there that will be defending their interests," he told CBC News.

One-time federal NDP candidate Lewis Cardinal, who is aboriginal himself, put it more bluntly,

"The first one through the wall gets bloodied but it opens the opportunity for others."

Cardinal ran in 2011 and had planned to run this time [but personal and health reasons have prevented him from seeking election this time](#).



Katherine Swampy said she was "shocked" by the racism she encountered during the recent provincial election. Her facebook page says she is seeking the NDP nomination for the federal riding of Red Deer-Lacombe (courtesy Katherine Swampy)

He said he'll still be involved in this election, specifically helping out with former chief Cameron Alexis campaign in Peace River-Westlock, who recently secured the nomination.

"I think there's a lot of disconnect right now with the processes and how you get elected," said Alexis, reached by phone at his home in Sherwood Cove, Lake Isle, about 80 kilometres west of Edmonton.

Racism biggest barrier, say aboriginal candidates

Cardinal said racism likely keeps aboriginal people from seeking nomination for political office.

"Racism is one of the unspoken and big issues across Canada," he said.

For NDP candidate and born and raised Edmontonian, Aretha Greatrix, racism has been both a deterrent and an incentive to enter politics.

"I was really kind of afraid of the racism," the 32-year-old said, adding that she used to dread riding the bus in Edmonton, knowing she'd hear an offhand racist comment or a joke about aboriginal people.

"It's kind of like that fear, do you want to invite that negativity in your life?

"Do you want to put yourself out there so that you can be attacked by people for a reason that's just for your background."

In the end, it was the racism that [Katherine Swampy, an aboriginal candidate in the provincial election endured, that ultimately was part of the reason why Greatrix decided to run.](#)

"I think when she went through it I almost felt like a fire in me, I'm not going to let her stand alone this time."

Both Greatrix and Alexis said they hope issues specific to aboriginal people, but really those that affect all Canadians, will increase voter turnout amongst First Nations.

"I think missing and murdered women is a big number one for me," said Greatrix.

"I didn't grow up with violence in my home but I did grow up seeing violence in friends' homes and that affected me greatly. There has to be a stopping point, it's the circle of violence and addiction, there has to be a stop to it."

Currently, the two aboriginal candidates in Alberta who have secured their nomination are both running for the NDP, a fact that Greatrix chalked up to the party's commitment to the "grassroots."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/inside-the-aboriginal-vote-in-alberta-1.3182227>

Cuthand: Aboriginal voters and candidates a powerful force

By Doug Cuthand, The Starphoenix August 7, 2015



Doug Cuthand

In Indian country, summer is a time to visit, travel and attend gatherings like cultural camps and pow wows. It's not a time for heavy duty politics, so the early election call will be ignored with the hope that it will go away.

In the past, summer was the time after the sun dances were held in late June or early July to coincide with the longest days of the year and the fall buffalo hunts. This was a time when the tribes would gather and friends and relatives would visit and be reacquainted.

Today, the tradition continues. We still observe the sun dance, and the remainder of the summer is spent visiting, attending cultural and language camps or pow wows and communal activities such as berry picking. Summer on the northern plains is short and too valuable to be wasted on a political campaign.

But having said that, we have undercurrents of politics floating around that are hard to ignore. This fall the FSIN will select a new chief, and the potential candidates are doing the summer pow wow circuit, letting their intentions be known and being seen - and of course we have the background noise of the federal election.

On the federal election front, groups are working with people to make sure that they have the necessary identification under the new voting restrictions imposed by the Harper government. Support groups to get out the vote are springing up in Indian country. "First Nations Rock the Vote" is a group that began in Kenora, Ont. and is poised to make its message felt across the country. They are also urging people to be made aware of the election issues, as well as get out and vote on election day.

The aboriginal vote may be the surprise factor in this election. The Harper government has a dismal record with First Nations and Métis people. There has been serious underfunding of statutory programs, and a lack of consultation on resource projects and recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights.

The government's most serious act of disrespect has been its lack of compassion and its refusal to call an inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women.

Taken together, there is a growing awareness in Indian country that the Conservatives don't reflect our best interests and instead side with the redneck attitude that is so prevalent across the west. Leadership means taking unpopular positions if they are best in the long run. The Harper government has refused to stick its neck out on aboriginal issues.

Saskatchewan stands to feel the effect of increased aboriginal participation in this election. Of the top 20 ridings in the country with the greatest percentage of aboriginal identified population, five are in here. The Desnethe-Missinippi-Churchill constituency in northern Saskatchewan is the third highest nationally at 71 per cent. Next is Prince Albert, at 30 per cent, followed by Regina-Qu'Appelle, Battlefords-Lloydminster and Saskatoon-West, all around 20 per cent.

In Saskatchewan, the Desnethe-Missinippi-Churchill riding has three aboriginal candidates running for the three main parties, so I can safely predict

Saskatchewan will send at least one aboriginal Member of Parliament to Ottawa. The CBC poll tracker places Georgina Jolibois of the NDP in the lead at 48.9 per cent, ahead of the incumbent, Rob Clarke of the Conservatives, who has 36.3 per cent support. Lawrence Joseph, who ran for the NDP in the last election and is now running under the

Liberal ticket, trails at 10.7 per cent. The CBC gives Ms. Jolibois a 77 per cent chance of getting elected.

This is an interesting constituency to watch. This summer's forest fires thrust individuals like Ms. Jolibois into the limelight. She is mayor of La Loche and she stayed behind after the evacuation to assist with the security and protection of her community.

I know it's early and an election campaign is an eternity, but the trend line favours the NDP in the north.

Three aboriginal candidates are running for the Liberals: Lawrence Joseph in the north, Della Anaquod in Regina-Qu'Appelle and Lisa Abbott in Saskatoon-West.

First Nations people first got the right to vote in the federal election of 1962. Since then, participation has been varied, with good participation in some areas and less in others. However, over the years our participation has grown steadily and the aboriginal caucus has grown, with all parties electing aboriginal candidates. Back in 1962, there were about 30,000 First Nations people in Saskatchewan. Today, our population exceeds 120,000 and when combined with the Métis exceeds 200,000. We are a significant voting block and in this election we have a chance to flex our political muscles.

But for now, let's enjoy the summer.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Cuthand+Aboriginal+voters+candidates+powerful+force/11272705/story.html>

Canada election 2015: Métis citizenship cards acceptable form of voter ID

President of the Manitoba Métis Federation hopeful change propels more Métis to the polls

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 07, 2015 8:15 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 08, 2015 1:29 PM CT



Métis citizenship cards will pass as acceptable voter identification in Manitoba during the federal election this fall, Elections Canada says.

David Chartrand, president of the Manitoba Métis Federation, said the spirit of the democratic process can be traced all the way back to the days of the buffalo hunt.

"The captain of the hunt had to be elected every morning in order to lead the hunting parties," said Chartrand. "So even [on] that level there was democracy — all the way to the choosing of Louis Riel, the choosing of our leaders."

Chartrand wants that tradition to continue when the country heads to the polls this October.



Now that Elections Canada has announced Métis citizenship cards are acceptable forms of voter identification, David Chartrand, the president of the Manitoba Métis Federation, said he hopes to see more of his people at the polls in this fall's federal election. (CBC)

With Elections Canada now permitting the use of Métis citizenship cards as proof of identity during the voter registration process, Chartrand is hopeful having one less obstacle will translate to more Métis people casting ballots on Oct. 19.

"They're hard to forge, and so it's very important that this card get its recognition," Chartrand said.

Lisa Forbes said the new rule for Métis voters is good news for Winnipeg Indigenous Rock the Vote, too. The group registers indigenous people to vote by helping them get the necessary identification.

"People have a hard time navigating the bureaucracies to be able to get the things they need," said Forbes. "Some people, if they live on low income, don't have the money or the resources to do that."

But political scientist Raymond Hebert isn't confident the change will immediately translate to more Métis voters at the polls.



The breakdown of indigenous federal election candidates as of Aug. 6, 2015. (CBC)

He maintains that a deep-seated mistrust in the Canadian political process harboured by factions of the Métis community won't be resolved by such a simple change.

"I don't think it will result in a greater participation-rate among Métis people in terms of voter turnout," said Hebert.

There are 52,000 eligible Métis voters in Manitoba with citizenship cards.

While Chartrand agreed that cynicism toward elections is common in the Métis community, he said he hopes the new change helps persuade more of those 52,000 people to head to the polls than in past elections.

"Too many times people say, 'Ah. it doesn't matter to me, I don't care who gets in,'" Chartrand said. "They have to care who gets in, because [it clearly affects] their futures and their families and themselves."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/canada-election-2015-m%C3%A9tis-citizenship-cards-acceptable-form-of-voter-id-1.3183953>

David Harper seeks re-election as MKO grand chief

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak election to be held Sept. 2

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 06, 2015 4:13 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 06, 2015 4:13 PM CT



David Harper, the current grand chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), will run against three other candidates in MKO's grand chief election, slated for Sept. 2 at the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Nelson House, Man. (CBC)

David Harper is seeking a third term as grand chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), the organization that represents northern First Nations in the province.

Harper is running against three other candidates in MKO's grand chief election, which will take place Sept. 2 at the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Nelson House, Man.

The organization's electoral officer released the list of nominated candidates on Thursday. They are:

- [Tyler Duncan](#) of the Norway House Cree Nation.
- David Harper of the Garden Hill First Nation
- William Elvis Thomas of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.
- [Sheila North Wilson](#) of the Bunibonibee Cree Nation.

Harper was first elected in 2009 and re-elected in 2012.

He was recently accused of misspending money at MKO, a non-profit, political advocacy organization that represents 30 northern First Nations.

Last year, member chiefs demanded Harper's suspension during an audit of the organization's finances. He refused, saying those personal expenses were paid back through payroll deductions.

Earlier this year, Harper was criticized for accepting money from the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. Again, there were calls for him to step down.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/david-harper-seeks-re-election-as-mko-grand-chief-1.3182197>

Leaders hope aboriginal voters will help swing results

By [Peter Henderson](#) / [Canada Politics](#) – Mon, 10 Aug, 2015

In the first federal election since the Idle No More movement signalled a renewed political engagement among Canada's aboriginal population, indigenous leaders are looking for change.

National chief Perry Bellegarde told an Assembly of First Nations (AFN) general assembly on July 7 that his group has identified 51 ridings across the country where aboriginal voters can swing the results, including nearly two dozen in the hands of Stephen Harper's Conservatives.

Despite historically low levels of voter turnout among Canada's indigenous populations, Bellegarde and others say this election is different.

"People are starting to realize the power of the First Nations vote if we can get organized," Bellegarde told Yahoo Canada News.

Bellegarde said that, while Canada is ranked in the top 10 in the United Nations' human development index, which includes measures of health, education and employment, the country's aboriginal population ranks in the 60s.

"When we win as First Nations people on any issue, everybody wins because that gap starts to close," he said. "There's a huge social cost to that gap. This election is an opportunity to bring about that change."

The 51 ridings include six in Ontario, three in Manitoba and seven in Saskatchewan, with around a further half dozen in British Columbia that have changed boundaries because of the recent expansion from 308 to 338 seats in Parliament.

While Bellegarde avoids partisan rhetoric, other AFN leaders have shown less reservation in calling for an end to Harper's time in office.

Ghislain Picard, the regional AFN chief for Quebec and Labrador, called the nine years that [Harper has been prime minister "disastrous" for aboriginal Canadians](#).

"I don't see how we can go another four years with this government, frankly," he has said.

In the Friday interview, Bellegarde said it wouldn't help his position to endorse any particular politician or party, and pledged to work with whomever is elected in October to address aboriginal issues.

"We just want to make sure that our people make informed choices," he said.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said the government is taking steps to improve the well-being of Canada's First Nations population, including new investment in education and skills training.

Emily Hillstrom said in an email that the government has built 41 new schools and funded over 500 school projects and taken action to support the integrity of the elections by which local and national indigenous leaders are elected, among other efforts.

"Our government believes that Aboriginal Peoples should have the same quality of life and the same opportunities as all other Canadians," she said.

There are currently seven serving members of Parliament with aboriginal roots: four with the Conservatives from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nunavut, including cabinet ministers Shelly Glover and Leona Aglukkaq, two from Quebec serving the New Democratic Party of Canada and one Liberal from Labrador.

The Liberal Party of Canada plans to field at least 13 candidates of aboriginal descent in the coming election, while the New Democratic Party has at least 11 candidates of aboriginal descent and the Conservatives are fielding three candidates of aboriginal descent.

In 2012, the Idle No More movement made headlines as aboriginal groups coalesced around opposition to a change to the law around Canada's navigable waterways. The movement evolved into a grassroots campaign seeking to redress many aboriginal issues that activists felt had been ignored for too long, such as the poor living conditions on many reserves and what they saw as government inactivity in the face of serious social problems in indigenous communities.

Alice Funke, the publisher of election-tracking website Pundits' Guide, said that the youth-driven Idle No More movement illustrates some of the power of a new generation of aboriginal Canadians.

According to Statistics Canada, 48.2 per cent of the aboriginal population in Canada is under the age of 24, compared with 29.4 per cent of the non-aboriginal population.

"The question for them is if they want to remain outside the Canadian political process or are they prepared to exert their clout at the ballot box," she said.

Historical voting patterns show that turnout among aboriginal Canadians is consistently lower than that of the general population.

In 2011, Elections Canada released a study that showed voter turnout for the general population was 58.8 per cent in the 2008 general election; for aboriginal voters as a whole it was 54.2 per cent. Among First Nations, voter turnout was 50.1 per cent.

The same study found that those who live on First Nations reserves report a lower turnout than those who live off-reserve.

Yet the number of aboriginal voters engaged in the political process through voting has risen over the past two decades, even as overall voter turnout has fallen.

Previous studies from the federal agency found that in the early 1990s there were spreads of between 15 to 20 per cent between turnout among aboriginal voters and the general population.

One Elections Canada study pointed to numerous reasons for the gap, including the long history of poor treatment of Aboriginal Peoples by the Canadian government, the relatively low number of aboriginal candidates, the lack of a national debate about aboriginal issues and poor communication and education about the voting process.

“There have been historically some hurdles and some challenges,” Bellegarde said. “But more and more people are getting it and understanding that we need to make a difference. And if we don't participate in these decision-making processes, nobody's going to care about our issues.”

Direct Link: <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/canada-politics/leaders-hope-aboriginal-voters-will-help-swing-results-170640022.html>

First Nations voting promoted through Facebook, Twitter campaign

'Giving the power back to the people in return strengthens the leadership,' Rex Knapaysweet says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 10, 2015 11:22 AM ET Last Updated: Aug 11, 2015 3:47 PM ET



Citizens of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation were encouraged to send photos to the #IamNAN campaign on Facebook as a means of engaging in regional politics. (Facebook)

First Nations citizens need the right to vote for their regional leadership, says Rex Knapaysweet a candidate for deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.



Rex Knapaysweet launched the @Kee_NAN_know and #IamNAN campaigns on social media to encourage citizens of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation to get involved in regional politics (Rex Knapaysweet/Facebook)

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is the provincial treaty organization for 49 First Nations in northern Ontario. Currently, only the chiefs of those First Nations are allowed to vote for the grand chief and deputy grand chief positions.

Knapaysweet launched the #IamNAN campaign account to encourage citizens of NAN to get involved in politics and push for their right to vote.

"We don't have that opportunity to vote for our national chief or our regional chiefs and I find that a huge disconnect from the grassroots people right through to leadership," Knapaysweet said.

'Their vote matters'

It's not the first time a candidate in the NAN election has made the universal vote part of their campaign platform, but Knapaysweet said he wanted to "strike while the iron is hot" and First Nations people are being encouraged to vote in the federal election.

"We need to encourage the First Nations people to go out and vote [federally] because their vote matters," he said. "But also we need to implement that in our own tribal councils and giving the power back to the people in return strengthens the leadership moving forward."

Knapaysweet, 30, and his team of "young professionals" also launched the @Kee_NAN_know Twitter feed. When spoken in Cree, the word means "us". Spelled out in English it speaks to the need for citizens to know more about NAN.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation election will take place Wednesday, Aug. 12. Knapaysweet said — even if he doesn't win — he'll continue his social media campaigning for the universal vote.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-voting-promoted-through-facebook-twitter-campaign-1.3185401>

Op-ed: First Nations people who opt out of voting ensure status quo

By Leon Thompson, The Starphoenix August 10, 2015



Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde (in headdress) and Justice Murray Sinclair (in black suit), TRC commissioner, march during the Walk for Reconciliation, part of the closing events of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Sunday, May 31, 2015 in Gatineau, Que.

Thompson is a nehiyaw law student in Saskatoon.

The prime minister officially kicked off the 78-day election campaign last Sunday, engaging the longest Canadian election since 1872. Only a few days before, I saw an article circulating on Facebook discussing First Nations and the federal election. The article's summary suggested that First Nations people participating in the federal election are helping the government diminish First Nations rights. It suggests that participating in the federal election plays into the government's plans to dispossess First Nations of their lands and sovereignty. Why? Because this is how government has always acted, and our participation will only ensure the extinguishment of our peoples and ways of life.

I disagree. Until enfranchisement, indigenous people could not vote to express themselves in the system that so brutally damaged us. Thinking about the reality of our situation is neither easy nor comfortable, but we cannot hide from the reality that indigenous peoples were, for a long time, treated as less than human. We were brainwashed into thinking we were inferior, that our lives had less intrinsic value, that how we understood the world was wrong and evil. As a result, there is not a heart that beats in this country that does not have the indelible mark of colonialism pressed into it. You can understand then why some First Nation peoples do not want to participate in elections.

On-reserve First Nations voter turnout hovered between 40 and 50 per cent in the last four elections, less than the general public, according to Elections Canada. This is not surprising; political parties have not meaningfully courted the indigenous vote in previous elections. Candidates don't always visit the reserves in their ridings, which contributes to the misinformation in the community.

What qualifies as a primary address, or proof of residency, are questions on the front of mind for those who are interested and willing to participate. Others are misinformed from years of being ignored, to the point where they do not want to participate. I once heard a story about a man running around a reserve saying if First Nation peoples voted in a provincial election, they would lose their status. These issues are all easily dealt with, but if we continue to operate the way we have previously, we will deny aspects of our collective identity.

This is precisely why indigenous people need more of a presence in Canadian politics. Only seven of 308 MPs elected in the 2011 election were indigenous. In 2013, Peter Penashue lost in a byelection. Rod Bruinooge and Shelly Glover are not running again. This means only four indigenous candidates, Romeo Saganash, Leona Aglukkaq, Rob Clarke and Jonathan Genest-Jourdain, are up for re-election. Until last Sunday, this was indigenous representation in the House of Commons.

Canada has not acted in the best interests of indigenous people, and election after election we are ignored. Does this mean we need to walk away from voting? Because the government might continue to do what it's always been doing? I cannot accept this. Leaving the electoral system to non-indigenous people only perpetuates the lack of understanding about the values of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

A non-indigenous person does not have, without our input, a frame of reference that can provide a deep understanding of indigenous issues. In the summer of 2011, someone I met through friends asked me a bunch of questions about indigenous peoples' ways of life, and closed the conversation with "Thanks for answering my questions, you're the first Indian person I've ever met." This happened in downtown Ottawa. This is why we cannot reject participation in the Canadian electoral process. If we shy away from electoral participation, First Nations without clean water, proper housing and viable economies are just business as usual.

Between the election in 2011 and now, we have entered an indigenous cultural resurgence, blending the old with the new. A Tribe Called Red shakes stages all over the country while showcasing traditional indigenous dancing talent. Rap groups like MobBounce address issues facing the modern indigenous worldview. CBC has a radio show called NewFire, which is all about giving the mic to young indigenous people, and this follows on the success of 8th Fire, where Wab Kinew walked Canada through our painful history, and the positive potential that we have together. Missing and murdered indigenous women are finally in the national spotlight, with everyone but the federal government calling for a national inquiry.

These are not our parents' political conditions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is dropping some of the heaviest truths upon Canada; a call to action with 94 recommendations in June, and several full volumes of findings sometime later this year. We're seeing more young, positive indigenous role models pop up in all communities. We are starting to be heard in mainstream culture, and traditional indigenous culture is increasingly resurgent. This year, the leaders of the federal NDP and Liberals appeared at the Assembly of First Nations General Assembly and set out a platform for engaging with indigenous peoples. Why would we now step away from engaging with Canadian political parties in one of the few ways that they cannot ignore?

A First Nation person's vote is worth just as much as a new Canadian's or a third generation settler-Canadian's. And there are hundreds of thousands of us, spread across the country, able to freely cast a ballot with no interference. I am not concerned with being assimilated by a ballot box. I am concerned with indigenizing the vote. If you're 18 or older and register to vote (which is super easy), you have the chance to make your voice heard.

Help Canada rediscover its indigenous roots. Eleven weeks of campaigning means so many more days to raise indigenous concerns, and to encourage indigenous people in Canada to vote.

We cannot expel the racist thoughts from the minds of those who simply don't understand history and the generational implications it carries. We can, however, expel from government those people who do not believe our concerns are warranted. We can vote for candidates who will bring us to the table, so we may correct their misconceptions. We can make a difference by electing people who respect First Nations, Metis, and Inuit world views. We need to elect those who will listen to concerns with empathy and create a space for indigenous people to join in navigating a positive way forward.

So I'm going to cover my digital canoe frame with articles of Truth and Reconciliation, my paddle made of Twitter's wings, and I will retweet into the mainstream. Canada is listening, and there is much we need to say.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/First+Nations+people+voting+ensure+status/11278765/story.html>

Federal election on minds of many at Saskatchewan Pow Wow



Participants dance in the Standing Buffalo First Nation Pow Wow on August 9, 2015.

CTV Regina

Published Monday, August 10, 2015 8:25AM CST

Hundreds gathered at the Standing Buffalo First Nation on Sunday for a pow wow celebrating indigenous culture, but with the federal election drawing near, the celebration wasn't the only consideration.

Keith Tacan made the trip from Sioux Valley, Manitoba. He hopes indigenous people will also leave their communities in October to go to the voting booths.

"It would really help our people out a lot more," Tacan told CTV News, "Instead of sitting around and doing nothing about it, you can get out and vote."

Other at the pow wow feel that regardless of the outcome of the election, the needs of First Nations peoples aren't made a priority. There are only 35 First Nations candidates running in the election.

"It's like the rest of Canada isn't concerned about First Nation's issues," Deon Hassler, the President of the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans Association said Sunday, "The only way we're going to be able to get anything done about First Nations issues is by having our people in political positions."

Tacan believes that many First Nations communities have trouble seeing the importance of voting, because the impact of residential schools still haunts so many, but he hopes times are changing.

"We're getting stronger now. The more people that get out and vote, these people will probably see the change," Tacan said.

Direct Link: <http://regina.ctvnews.ca/federal-election-on-minds-of-many-at-saskatchewan-pow-wow-1.2509829>

Indigenous Vote Sask aims to boost voter registration, turnout

Taking up role Elections Canada forced to surrender

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 11, 2015 12:12 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 11, 2015 4:06 PM CT



Organizers Melody Wood and Glenda Abbott set up for volunteer training session. (Kathy Fitzpatrick/CBC)

The Harper government's Fair Elections Act was just the push Glenda Abbott said she needed to encourage indigenous people to exercise their right to vote.

"I think there's a lot of unfairness happening," Abbott said.

She and her group Indigenous Vote Sask are taking on the task Elections Canada used to do — but is barred from doing in this election.

Abbott and fellow organizer Melody Wood are in the throes of recruiting volunteers who will help as many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people as possible register to vote.

She concedes it's a huge undertaking, but what has happened in the past four years is spurring her on.

"I just realized that we need to elect the right people who are going to represent our needs for the environment and in a lot of areas," Abbott said.

Identifying barriers to registration

She and Wood are hoping to partner with larger, better-resourced groups such as the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Saskatoon Tribal Council.



Curtis Peeteetuce gets the message out at Indigenous Vote Sask volunteer training session. (Kathy Fitzpatrick/CBC)

For now, they are focused on identifying barriers to registration outside urban areas, particularly regarding voter identification, and trying to get people registered by mail.

"Hopefully with community support as well as our volunteers, together we can make things happen in communities," she added.

Monday night they held a "train the trainers" type of gathering with prospective volunteers, familiarizing them with the Elections Canada web site.

The volunteers will then be matched up with communities that want to boost the number of registered voters and get them out to the polls.

Curtis Peeteetuce is one of the volunteers.

"Back in the last federal election 9.3 million people did not vote. I was shocked when I heard that number and I thought 'that's a lot of my friends, could be a lot of my family, and a lot of people in my neighbourhood as well,' " he said.

For his part, he votes in every election. He does it for his five-year-old son.

"Indigenous people in Canada have a rich culture, language and history. And it's important for him to be connected on all those fronts," Peeteetuce explained. "I think having the right to vote, being aware of our democracy, and just the overall milieu of the Canadian front is really important for him. And so I exercise that through my own right."

John Lagimodiere, publisher and editor of Eagle Feather News, said there are historical reasons for low voter turnout among aboriginal people. Before 1960, First Nations people had no right to vote in federal elections.

"There was a disconnect there, and it was always seen as white man's elections, and not impacting their community" Lagimodiere explained. "But in the last five years with Idle No More and people putting the fact that a bad government policy leads to bad housing on-reserve, they're making that connection."

He sees the potential for a higher aboriginal turnout to affect the outcome in two ridings: Desnethe-Misinippi-Churchill River in the north, and the urban riding of Saskatoon West.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, reckons seven ridings in Saskatchewan could see an impact. In particular, he would add Regina Qu'Appelle and Lloydminster to Lagimodiere's list.

"We tell our people and we tell all Canadians that this election is about closing the gap that exists between First Nations peoples' quality of life and everybody else's. It's huge," Bellegarde said.

On Wednesday, Aug. 19 Indigenous Vote Sask is holding another volunteer voter registration training session at 6 p.m. CST at 814 20th Street West.

Meanwhile, another group has organized a voter registration clinic for Friday, Aug. 14 at Station 20 West from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CST. People are asked to bring ID. One piece should have the person's name on it. A second piece should have their name and address.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/indigenous-vote-sask-aims-to-boost-voter-registration-turnout-1.3187235>

Mulcair 'proud' to see FTQ unions support NDP instead of Bloc

[Giuseppe Valiante, The Canadian Press](#)

Published on: August 11, 2015 | Last Updated: August 11, 2015 6:15 PM EDT



NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair speaks at the Assembly of First Nations 36th Annual General Assembly at the Bonaventure Hotel in Montreal, on Tuesday, July 7, 2015. Dave Sidaway / Montreal Gazette

MASCOUCHE — A major and sovereigntist-leaning labour federation in Quebec has dropped its long-standing endorsement of the Bloc Québécois and some of its member unions are supporting the NDP, making party leader Tom Mulcair “extremely proud.”

Mulcair said New Democrats will work hard to maintain support from Quebec’s unions — who have traditionally supported sovereigntist parties at the federal and provincial levels — in order to “expand our traditional base and rally progressives across Quebec and Canada.”

Quebec’s FTQ federation is heavily involved in politics; it covers 37 labour unions and counts 600,000 members.

Its secretary-general, Serge Cadieux, said Tuesday the FTQ is not officially endorsing any political party, but that two of its unions have so far come out in support of the NDP.

The federation has officially endorsed the Bloc in almost every federal election since the early ’90s and it favours the sovereigntist Parti Québécois provincially.

This time, however, Cadieux said the Bloc is not best-placed to beat the Conservatives, whom he called “catastrophic” for working people.

Cadieux said the FTQ has targeted 10 ridings in Quebec where support for the Conservatives is relatively strong and where it will “focus its energies.”

The plan is to endorse and help any candidate in those ten ridings who has the best shot at beating a Tory, whether they be affiliated with the Liberals, NDP, Bloc or the Green party, Cadieux said.

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe downplayed the news Tuesday, saying that the FTQ has been planning to drop its support for the Bloc for a while.

“The (FTQ) is not endorsing any specific party,” he said in Quebec City. “It will support candidates in 10 ridings. ... We’ve known that for a year.”

Conservative Leader Stephen Harper’s Quebec lieutenant, Denis Lebel, [took to Twitter on Tuesday and slammed the NDP](#) saying “[the last thing the country needs is an NDP government at the mercy of unions](#).”

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said he wasn’t surprised that an “organization that is openly and officially sovereignist” chooses to support the NDP rather than his “truly federalist” party.

The NDP leader brushed off suggestions that support from a large and powerful labour federation that has historically supported the separatist Bloc would hurt the party’s image outside Quebec.

Mulcair said the NDP is a big tent that welcomes all Quebecers, even if some of them have supported the sovereignist cause in the past.

“That’s the beauty of the NDP’s offer to Quebecers,” he said during a campaign stop at a pre-fabricated house company in Mascouche, just north of Montreal.

“We want to go beyond the old quarrels of the past.”



Federal NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair, and his wife, Catherine Pinhas, pet a cow while visiting a dairy farm, Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2015, in Danville, Que. Ryan Remiorz / The Canadian Press

Mulcair also visited a family dairy farm Tuesday in Danville, about 130 kilometres northeast of Montreal, and said if elected, he would create a payment-protection program for farmers who don’t get paid if they sell their products to U.S. companies that go bankrupt.

Mulcair also said he agreed to participate in a bilingual debate on foreign policy hosted by The Munk Debates on Sept. 28.

There are two other debates scheduled, one by the Globe and Mail and another by French-language broadcaster TVA. Mulcair said he'd participate in the TVA debate but would only confirm the Globe one if Harper agreed to take part in a second French-language debate.

Mulcair is scheduled to spend Wednesday in the Quebec City area, where the party says it can maintain its seats and take others away from the Conservatives, who have strong support in the region.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/ftq-turns-its-back-on-bloc-quebécois-throws-support-to-ndp>

Justin Trudeau addresses aboriginal relations and taxes for the middle class in Regina



CTV Regina

Published Wednesday, August 12, 2015 10:20AM CST

Last Updated Wednesday, August 12, 2015 10:52AM CST

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau spoke to a large crowd Wednesday morning at the Regina Farmer's Market.

Trudeau is the first candidate to stop in Saskatchewan for this election campaign.

Trudeau began his speech by thanking local MP for Wascana, Ralph Goodale, for his service over the years. Saying Goodale has been a strong voice for Saskatchewan in Ottawa.

Trudeau then addressed his promise to invest in the middle class. The Liberal party plans to raise taxes for the wealthiest one per cent to lower them for the middle class, said Trudeau.

“We know that an economy that works for the middle class means a country that works for everyone,” said Trudeau.

The NDP’s minimum wage wouldn’t apply to 99 per cent of those who make minimum wage, said Trudeau, and nine out of 10 families will be “better off” under the Liberal plan.

Trudeau then spoke to Indigenous peoples, saying that 10 years of Stephen Harper government has failed First Nations peoples.

The Liberal government says they will support all of the truth and reconciliation recommendations and are committed to national inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Trudeau spoke about climate change, saying it is a very real issue. With recent draughts and floods in Saskatchewan, the Liberal party will work with municipalities in times of extreme weather events.

Trudeau will be in La Ronge to meet with leaders Wednesday afternoon.

Direct Link: <http://regina.ctvnews.ca/justin-trudeau-addresses-aboriginal-relations-and-taxes-for-the-middle-class-in-regina-1.2513574>

Why voter turnout is lower among First Nations

It became common practice that aboriginal people did not take part in "white man's voting"

By Don Marks, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 12, 2015 11:56 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 12, 2015 1:26 PM CT



The Assembly of First Nations claims that the First Nations vote could affect the outcome in at least 51 ridings in Canada and could make the difference between electing a majority or a minority government. (Nathan Denette/Canadian Press)

Political candidates who are counting on support from indigenous people are often told they usually don't vote.

There is no data that can absolutely confirm this adage but numerous studies indicate the voter turnout rate in federal elections for First Nations people is generally lower than the national average, sometimes by a substantial percentage.

The Assembly of First Nations claims that the First Nations vote could affect the outcome in at least 51 ridings in Canada and could make the difference between electing a majority or a minority government. If this could provide First Nations with influence in a balance of power situation, they are paying a huge price by not participating in the political process in numbers their population should warrant.

It is easy and simplistic to claim First Nations people are solely responsible for this loss of political power and the benefits it may bring because of their own ignorance or apathy.

That kind of stereotyping is unfair because Canadian history and a much more complicated situation facing indigenous voters have combined to create a myriad of valid reasons for the relatively low turnout of native voters.

But it remains a costly problem which needs to be overcome.

It is quite commonly known that "Indians", as they were called half a century ago, were not allowed to vote until July 1, 1960. Actually, they could vote, but they had to become "disenfranchised" first, which meant giving up their special Treaty status.

And so it became the common practice that aboriginal people did not take part in "white man's voting" in the 30 or so federal elections which were held prior to 1960.

Not only was apathy and indifference passed on from generation to generation, so was the anger and mistrust that mainstream elections created by maintaining and enforcing the Indian Act which was implemented by the federal government's Department of Indian

Affairs. More simply, why would the people of one sovereign nation be voting in another nation's elections?

On the other hand, there were numerous government policies and accounts in the media that claimed because Indians were kept isolated on impoverished reserves, the Canadian public considered them to be "uncivilized", uneducated and unworthy wards of the state who were not qualified to vote, or participate in many other so-called civilized activities.

They had a lot of catching up to do to integrate, much less assimilate, as the governments of Canada wanted them to do, and there remain some who have not even bothered with any of it to this day.

This is not to say that indigenous people weren't politically active. Every two years, many First Nations hold elections for chief and council. This is their politics. It is a completely separate system from electing city councillors, MLAs and MPs, but often substitutes and sucks up scant energy which can be applied to understanding and participating in mainstream politics.

Many indigenous people refuse to vote in their own elections because they are a creature of the government, not their own traditions. First Nations people often do not want to be counted in a ballot box or on a census form because the provincial government uses that data to collect per capita grants on their behalf from the federal government.

And voting is not the only method of political expression. The most well-known methods indigenous people have used to participate in the political process with varying degrees of success have been demonstrations and protests like road and railway blockades.

Idle No More was most effective protesting legislation in omnibus bills by holding mildly disruptive round dances and distributing literature which reasonably explained their cause

Perhaps the aboriginal electoral process leading to local chiefs, territorial and provincial grand chiefs and a national chief is good enough. First Nations could just rely on the leaders they elect through their own political process to lobby and get the federal government to live up to the Treaties.

Some indigenous leaders say we need a new and different electoral system, perhaps something like they have in New Zealand where a certain number of seats are set aside for the indigenous Maori people.

In the end, it seems to come full circle, and First Nations people need to recognize how important it is to vote in a federal election, just like 61 per cent (on average) of the rest of the population does.

That could be boosted by some important, high profile issue that brings out the native vote, like free trade or the GST or conscription has done for the general population in the past.

As they say, "It doesn't matter how you vote, just be sure to vote."

In the meantime, indigenous Liberal candidate for Winnipeg Centre, Robert-Falcon Ouelette, has come up with a way of looking at it all that seems to combine the best of both worlds.

"This election is my Idle No More," Ouelette says.

Even if voting is much more complicated for indigenous voters, you cannot win if you do not play.

There is nothing to win when First Nations remain nations within but not represented within.

Don Marks is a Winnipeg writer and the editor of Grassroots News

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/why-voter-turnout-is-lower-among-first-nations-1.3188572>

Trudeau vows to mend Canada's 'broken' relationship with aboriginal peoples

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: August 13, 2015 | Last Updated: August 13, 2015 11:02 AM EDT

A middle-aged woman stumbles out of the Great Northern Pub and into the blistering August heat.

She walks through the parking lot, turns around and focuses on a large man at the bar's entrance.

"You touch me and I'll call the cops," she says, slurring her words. "Look at you, you look like a gorilla!" It's just before 3 p.m. on a Wednesday in La Ronge – a northern Saskatchewan village that sits in one of the poorest federal ridings in Canada.

Just a few hours before the incident outside the pub, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau landed in the remote community to tour the swaths of forest that were consumed by wildfire last month. The fire came within a few hundred metres of downtown La Ronge,

displaced thousands of First Nations people but stopped before the power lines at Highway 107.

In a moment of pure political theatre, Trudeau walked along the ash-covered heaps with veteran Saskatchewan MP Ralph Goodale and local leaders, promising them a national forest fire strategy to avoid future tragedies.

He also promised to mend Canada's "broken" relationship with its aboriginal peoples. The Liberal leader said he wanted to bridge the gap between Canadians' standard of living and the abysmal conditions that have become the norm in many First Nations.

For all the rhetoric and dry policy talk, the need for some solution seemed urgent on a Wednesday afternoon outside the Great Northern Pub, where two men and a woman loudly threatened each other with bodily harm.

The exchange, though jarring, isn't an indictment of La Ronge or the Dene Cree who live in the region. Locals say there is an emerging, youthful population that wants to balance the traditional way of life with the challenges it faces in a recession economy.

But Liberal candidate Lawrence Joseph claims that outside of a few jobs at the nearby uranium mine, in trucking or logging, there's little work for even the most qualified youth. As with many remote First Nations, addiction and domestic violence are also critical problems. For the people of La Ronge, these ills are the legacy of Canada's history of assimilationist policies. Joseph, a former military man and Prince Albert city councillor, is looking to unseat incumbent Tory MP Rob Clarke in the Desnethes-Missinippi-Churchill River riding. Roughly 70 per cent of the district's residents are aboriginal and the Liberals believe they have a realistic chance of upsetting their Conservative rivals. "Clarke is our MP but sometimes we wonder what that stands for. Missing person?" said Joseph, who lost a close race against Clarke when he ran for the New Democrats in 2011.

"He's not very popular." Since running for party leadership three years ago, Trudeau has heavily courted the First Nations vote. He endorsed the Idle No More protest movement in 2012 and, later that winter, met with Atwapiskat Chief Theresa Spence during her hunger strike against the Tory Government.

Last month in Montreal, he promised to eliminate annual caps on First Nations funding and initiate a public inquiry into the country's missing and murdered aboriginal women crisis.

But Trudeau's support of the government's controversial antiterrorism bill has put him at odds with First Nations leaders. Early drafts of the law made it possible for Canada's authorities to clamp down hard on the anti-pipeline protesters – many of whom are aboriginal leaders.

Confronted with his support of the bill in La Ronge, Trudeau stuck to his well-worn talking points.

“Canadians understand that we need a government to protect our security and protect our rights and freedoms,” Trudeau said during a news conference by a dusty highway outside the village. “Mr. Harper doesn’t think we should do anything more to protect our rights and freedoms. Mr. Mulcair doesn’t think we should do more to protect ourselves. In both cases they’re wrong.”

Pressed on how a Trudeau government would guard Canada’s spy agencies against civil rights violations, the Liberal leader insisted parliamentary oversight was the answer.

“Oversight by parliamentarians ... means that Canadians can be reassured that those agencies are defending our freedoms but not crossing those lines,” he said. “Not intruding into peoples lives when it isn’t warranted.”

The Trudeau team then hopped on a plane to Meadow Lake, where it met with a few hundred constituents in an Anglican Church. Unlike events in urban Regina or Montreal earlier in the week, Trudeau wasn’t mobbed by supporters in Cree territory.

He still draws a crowd, signs autographs and says all the right things but his “saviour of the middle class” message doesn’t resonate as much in communities where simply getting by is a daily struggle. “Concretely, we need to talk about investing in infrastructure, whether that’s housing or other projects, we need to talk about investing in education,” he said. “I am focused on building a relationship that is nation to nation.” It remains to be seen if these words – repeated ad-nauseum by federal leaders of every political stripe – will resonate with Saskatchewan’s aboriginal voters.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/national/justin-trudeau-vows-to-mend-canadas-broken-relationship-with-aboriginal-peoples>

Indigenous Vote Saskatchewan seeks volunteers

By Betty Ann Adam, The StarPhoenix August 12, 2015



Melody Wood, Curtis Peeteetuce and Glenda Abbot, left to right, on the South Saskatchewan River, to illustrate story about grassroots movement to encourage indigenous people to vote, Tuesday, August 11, 2015.

When Glenda Abbot learned the government had removed environmental protections for most of the rivers and lakes in Canada, she knew she had to encourage more indigenous people to use their votes.

“I can’t believe that leadership can make this kind of decision and we’re going to be forever impacted, she said.

“The reason why our waters are not protected and the environmental impacts that are faced, the lack of protection against pipelines and everything, is directly related to our leaders that we have in power.

“(Voting) could make a difference, and if we all did it we definitely could make a difference.”

Abbot and a small group of friends are the driving forces behind Indigenous Vote Saskatchewan 2015 (IVS), a grassroots, non-partisan movement to help indigenous people get registered to vote.

The group invites anyone interested in helping indigenous voters through the registration process to a ‘train the trainers’ event on Aug. 19 at 814 20th Street West. The IVS Facebook page will post an event with details.

The training session there is for others who want to join them in helping voters who are confused by the rules but put off by the formality of the Elections Canada website and phone system.

Station 20 West is working to help Saskatoon residents get registered, so IVS is focusing on helping rural voters.

The group has reached out to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), which has agreed to distribute information to First Nations. IVF members also intend to visit First Nations that want them to teach clinics on how to meet the new requirements to vote.

One way First Nations can help is by preparing confirmation of residence forms for on-reserve residents who don’t have other government-issued ID with addresses, she said.

Abbot, Melody Wood, Curtis Peeteetuce and Marcel Petit are among the volunteers who have been learning all they can about the problems voters could face in becoming registered and how to solve them.

The Fair Elections Act, which has placed new hurdles in front of many native people, has inspired them to do whatever they can before the Oct. 19 election, Abbot said.

“I’m just so hurt by the constant barriers and what feels like a constant oppression of people who actually need a lift up rather than what’s currently happening. It’s a really,

really short amount of time to sacrifice. I mean, a couple months? It could be one of the most important decisions that we've made in a really long time."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/technology/Indigenous+Vote+Saskatchewan+seeks+volunteers/11282744/story.html>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Two First Nations challenging Site C environmental permits

William STODALKA / Prince George Citizen
August 6, 2015 08:45 PM



Prophet River and West Moberly, are seeking to quash environmental permits issued by the B.C. government for the Site C dam.

Site C requires a number of permits under a variety of provincial and federal legislation before it can begin certain stages of construction.

According to the petition brought forward by the First Nations, there are at least 36 permits to do things such as cut down trees in certain areas, collect fish, destroy beaver dams, remove bald eagle nests, and more.

The petitioners say that in November 2012, BC Hydro told the two First Nations that it intended to apply for the permits before the environmental assessment process was over.

They supposedly referred to this as "synchronized permitting."

The First Nations did not go for this because it would divide their resources and they felt it would be premature to do so. BC Hydro and the provincial government agreed to postpone consultation until later.

In the spring of 2015, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the First Nations agreed to negotiate a custom consultation process on these permits.

Last April, they signed an agreement to guide the negotiation of the custom consultation process.

That custom consultation process agreement was not finalized, the petition to the court states.

On May 29, Treaty 8 was informed that the B.C. government wanted to conclude consultation on these higher-priority permits by June 5.

This raised concerns for the First Nations, since it would conclude consultation before the First Nations had concluded their independent technical review.

In the document, they state that completing an independent technical review as required by the negotiation agreement "would take at least three months and as long as a year."

On July 7, the B.C. government told the two First Nations that they had approved certain permits.

The petitions argue that by issuing these permits before completing a consultation process set out in the negotiation agreement, there was not enough time for the First Nation to prepare a complete response regarding the potential adverse effects of the permits on treaty rights to hunt and fish.

In addition to quashing the permits, the two bands are seeking an injunction from performing any work pursuant to the permits until the petition is heard and decided by the court.

Two of these permits include an occupant licence to cut along the north bank of the Peace River for the dam. Work for that was recently awarded to Morgan Construction, an Alberta-based company.

On July 31, Dave Conway, a BC Hydro spokesman, wrote that "some initial clearing activities on the north bank are underway."

Calls to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations were not returned as of press time.

BC Hydro declined comment.

The petition gives Hydro and the Ministry 21 days to respond.

Calls to West Moberly First Nation Chief Roland Willson and his law firm asking for comment were not returned as of press time.

This is a second legal challenge brought forward by these two First Nations against the province.

The first was against the environmental assessment certificate for the dam, which allowed overall construction to begin.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/two-first-nations-challenging-site-c-environmental-permits-1.2023653#sthash.0WXBerm0.dpuf>

Syncrude bird deaths bring up 'serious concerns' with regulatory policies: Alberta First Nation

By [Caley Ramsay](#) Web Producer Global News
August 9, 2015 7:07 pm



EDMONTON — Members of northern Alberta First Nation say the deaths of 30 blue herons at an oilsands mine site near Fort McMurray earlier this week shows there are “serious deficiencies” in the regulatory policies.

“We’ve been notified that these birds did not land in a tailings pond but they were in an abandoned part of the site that had been utilized in the past, so it seems as though there may have been some sort of contaminant that they were exposed to in this area that’s abandoned,” said Eriel Deranger, executive assistant to Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam.

“It really draws up some serious concerns about how these areas are being managed and policed.”

The Alberta Energy Regulator said Saturday one blue heron was found covered in oil Wednesday at the Syncrude Canada’s Mildred Lake oilsands mine site. It was alive, but had to be euthanized. Syncrude staff investigated the site further and found other dead birds. They were reported to the AER on Friday.

“They were close to a sump which is a low area where runoff fluids gather. And there was some bitumen there which impacted the one bird that they found this week and euthanized. The others were outside of that area so it’s unclear what the cause of death was,” Bob Curran, a spokesperson with the AER said Saturday.

The bird deaths come less than one month after a massive pipeline leak was discovered in northern Alberta. The leak at Nexen’s Long Lake facility, [which was discovered on July 15, spilled an estimated 5,000 cubic metres of emulsion](#) – about 5 million litres of bitumen, sand and wastewater – over a 16,000-square-metre area about 36 kilometres southeast of Fort McMurray.

“This incident is on the heels of the largest oil spill in Canadian history and there have been numerous other incidents that are similar to these types of things, maybe not to this extent with the oil spill, but numerous incidents in the region that come from, sort of, this lagging environmental policing and regulatory policies of the region,” said Deranger.

Deranger said while Alberta’s NDP government has made commitments to forge stronger relationships with First Nations and work with them on environmental issues, more needs to be done.

“What it really sort of highlights is the fact that there is a really strong lagging record of reclamation in the region that’s leaving all these large areas of land sort of open and contaminated in various levels and various stages,” she said. “The government needs to really start amping up the game and really focusing on prioritizing reclamation.

“We really hope that the new government stays true to their commitments on improving environmental standards and stewardship and relations with First Nations, because they’re really one in the same thing.”

Syncrude said Fish and Wildlife was immediately notified when the first bird was found Wednesday and it is conducting its own investigation.

Syncrude, which operates one of the biggest oilsands sites north of Fort McMurray, was fined \$3 million for the deaths of more than 1,600 ducks when they landed on its tailings pond in 2008.

In November 2014, about 30 birds died after landing on a tailings pond at Syncrude's Mildred Lake facility. In total, 122 waterfowl died after landing on three sites, including the CNRL Horizon facility and Suncor Energy's tailings pond.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2155496/syncrude-bird-deaths-bring-up-serious-concerns-with-regulatory-policies-alberta-first-nation/>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Traditional fishing revival launched by First Nations man

Traditional fishing method was used until 1916, when it was banned by government

By Tamsyn Burgmann, The Canadian Press Posted: Aug 09, 2015 12:05 PM PT Last Updated: Aug 10, 2015 9:26 AM PT



Nick Claxton poses for a photo while setting a reef net, almost a century after fishing practices unique to First Nations in B.C.'s Salish Sea were outlawed. (Canadian Press)

Almost a century after fishing practices unique to First Nations in B.C.'s Salish Sea were outlawed, members paddled canoes back to traditional waters and dropped their full-sized reef net.

It was the start of a long-term mission to revitalize the once-celebrated technique for gathering food and bonding community for the Strait Salish people.

The web-like net — about the length of a city bus — was suspended between two canoes in an endeavour by a University of Victoria doctoral student who envisions bringing his nation's fishing style "back to life."

"In traditional times, it was really the backbone of our society," said Nick Claxton, who successfully defended his thesis on the practice in late July before an academic panel and 100 of his community members.

"And that's how I want it to be in the future. Where we can all be reef-net fishermen."

Claxton, 42, initially set out to document the history of reef-net fishing and investigate ways to restore the practice. His research found that Strait Salish people relied on the method until 1916, when the colonial government called it a "fish trap" and brought in a ban.

"What is ironic is right around that time they allowed J. H. Todd and Sons to fish with their fish trap. It was at the time when the industrial-commercial fisheries started to develop," he said. "What I think they wanted was just access to our fishing locations."

Knowledge system nearly lost

Aboriginal people were discriminated against despite being signatories to the 1852 Douglas Treaty, which formally guaranteed their fisheries, Claxton said.

Some First Nations maintained the fishery on the American side of the Salish Sea, but Washington state officials stopped them in the 1950s or 1960s, said Claxton.



First Nations fishermen are shown setting a reef net in this undated handout photo. (Canadian Press)

"That was really the last time we fished with reef nets," said Claxton. "The knowledge system of it was nearly lost."

Claxton realized the opportunity for reviving the fishery style as he dove into his thesis.

"It became more a project of 'Let's go out and do it.' So that's how that happened. We built a full-sized, modern reef net and we actually went fishing with it last summer."

Band members of all ages got involved. School children were taught about the lore, while youth and elders designed the system and then held a sacred ceremony.

They left from Saanich Peninsula and went fishing in their hereditary fishing grounds around Pender Island, one of the southern Gulf Islands along the Canada-United States border.

It was the first test of their newly constructed net, made with the same materials as a modern seine net. They suspended it between two canoes, which were secured by anchors. The net remained opened at one end, acting like a corral for incoming salmon.

Valuable experience

There was only one hitch in the trial last August — the fish didn't co-operate. The sockeye run was massive, but most returning salmon migrated along a different route than expected, likely due to warmer waters, Claxton said.

"We didn't catch anything, but it was a success because we were able to get the net fishing. And nothing bad happened, no accidents," he said. "The experience of doing it was more valuable than anything."

One reef net could haul up to 5,000 salmon per day. Claxton's hoping for another attempt this year — maybe in a few weeks — but it could be stymied again, by a low salmon returns.

His research will form the backbone of new curriculum in a local school. High school students will not only learn the fishery technology, but about its sustainability. No fossil fuels are burned, while unwanted bycatch can be released unharmed.

"That's the practical reasons for it, but it's also a fundamental part of our traditional way of life," Claxton said. "It can provide a sense of identity for our community and our nation."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/traditional-fishing-revival-launched-by-first-nations-man-1.3184856>

N.W.T. Métis Nation signs AIP, draws outrage from other groups

Akaitcho, North Slave Métis Alliance say they weren't properly consulted before deal signed

By Hilary Bird, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 10, 2015 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 10, 2015 4:00 AM CT



Bill Enge of the North Slave Métis Alliance calls the federal government's agreement-in-principle with the N.W.T. Métis Nation 'tantamount to Métis ethnic cleansing.' (CBC)

Aboriginal leaders in the North and South Slave areas of the Northwest Territories say they are outraged the federal government chose to sign an agreement-in-principle (AIP) with the N.W.T. Métis Nation.

The N.W.T. Métis Nation and the federal government have been negotiating a land claim in the southern part of the territory for over two decades. Last month, the two sides signed an AIP that gives the Métis Nation hunting and harvesting rights to what it says is its traditional territory south of Great Slave Lake.

"The Akaitcho Chiefs have authorized our legal counsel to bring a motion to Federal Court for a ruling that Canada acted improperly in signing this AIP," says Deninu Kue First Nation Chief Louis Balsillie.

In 2012, the Akaitcho Dene First Nations launched a federal court case against the federal government and the N.W.T. Métis Nation. It calls on a federal judge to halt negotiation between the two groups.

In court documents, the Akaitcho argue the AIP interferes with its own land claim talks and that the Métis have no aboriginal right to the land.

Overlapping claims

Both groups are laying claim to some of the same areas around the communities of Hay River, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith.

In court documents, the Akaitcho argue Canada had a duty to consult with them before they began negotiating an agreement with the N.W.T. Métis Nation.

"While a consultation process did take place, the concerns of the Akaitcho Dene First Nations were not fully addressed," the group said in a press release.

The federal government announced it had signed the AIP with the N.W.T. Métis Nation on July 31.

"The federal government signed this AIP on the eve of dropping the writ for a general election knowing full well that we have a court proceeding underway," says Lutsel K'e Chief Felix Lockhart.

'Frog-marched down there'

The Akaitcho aren't the only First Nation that takes issue with the AIP.

The North Slave Métis Alliance, the governing body for Métis north of Great Slave Lake, says it also wasn't consulted.

Bill Enge, says because many of his members' ancestral heritage comes from south of the lake, they will be forced to be a part of the N.W.T. Métis Nation land claim. The North Slave Métis recently received the right to hunt a small portion of Bathurst caribou. Enge says his members will have to give up that right if they're forced to join the N.W.T. Métis Nation land claims.

"What the Crown has done is say, 'Whether you like it or not, you and those like you will be going into that land claim. You are going to be frog-marched down there and we're taking you right out of Yellowknife,'" Enge says.

"This whole thing is tantamount to Métis ethnic cleansing by taking the Métis out of the North Slave by slippery methods."

Claim optional, Métis Nation says

But the N.W.T. Métis Nation says that's not the case. It says Métis will have a choice whether they want to join the land claim.

"The enrolment of eligible indigenous Métis will be voluntary in accordance with a resulting final agreement," an official with the group told CBC News in an email. "Enrolment will happen after the final agreement is ratified by eligible indigenous Métis."

Enge says the North Slave Métis Alliance will be launching a court case, challenging the legitimacy of the AIP.

The Akaitcho chiefs say they will continue with their court case. They say they will wait until after October's federal election to ask Ottawa to put a stop to the negotiations.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/n-w-t-m%C3%A9tis-nation-signs-aip-draws-outrage-from-other-groups-1.3184960>

First Nations elders to guide deconstruction process of B.C. home built atop burial site

By THE CANADIAN PRESS August 10, 2015



File photo: Island residents together with First Nations elders took to the water to demand a halt to the construction of a luxury home on Grace Islet. Grace Islet in Ganges Harbour on Salt Spring Island on August 26, 2014. Organized by Salt Spring Islanders for Justice and Reconciliation and Salt Spring Residents for Responsible Land Use, the gathering was in solidarity with First Nations to stop the desecration of the tiny islet which their people have used a cemetery for a thousand years or more.

SALTSPRING ISLAND — Crews will soon deconstruct a partially built home on a sacred burial site off Saltspring Island after a multimillion-dollar deal with the landowner.

Construction on a Grace Islet house started last fall after the landowner got the necessary permits, but First Nations raised concerns about the historical significance of the area.

Work stopped in December, and the land was transferred to the Nature Conservancy of Canada after the B.C. government paid the landowner \$5.45 million.

Linda Hannah, the nature conservancy's regional vice-president, said Monday that the house was at the framing stage when the order to stop work was issued.

She said cultural workers will be at the site to ensure that 16 cairns beneath the foundation are not disturbed.

Hannah said elders from eight First Nations will provide guidance on the deconstruction process in an area that is also known for its 200-year-old juniper, Garry oak and Douglas fir trees.

Chief James Thomas of the Halalt First Nation in Chemainus said he and other leaders approached the province and the Capital Regional District when they became aware of the project in 2012.

However, he said B.C.'s Heritage Conservation Act, which is supposed to protect archeological sites, seemed to lack any power when it came to stopping the construction on Grace Islet.

"They just kept moving forward with it even though we were fighting it and showing it was an actual burial site," he said.

"We were trying to block the barge from coming in with timber and everything to build it," he said.

The eight First Nations do not know whose ancestors are buried at the site, he said, adding: "Different tribes would use that area for hunting and fishing."

Cowichan Tribes Chief William Seymour said the First Nation is pleased that the matter has now been resolved through collaboration with the provincial and local governments.

"Although there is some cause for celebration, we are also mindful that this is solemn work," he said in a statement.

Capital Regional District director Wayne McIntyre said the work ahead is aimed at restoring the site to its natural state and keeping it that way.

"Grace Islet illustrates the critical importance of improving the heritage protection permitting process to ensure the preservation of the cultural history and protection of the resting places of indigenous ancestors," he said in a statement.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/First+Nations+elders+guide+deconstruction+process+home+built+atop/11279497/story.html>

First Nations guide removal of Grace Islet home on burial site

Amy Smart / Times Colonist
August 10, 2015 11:47 AM



B.C. taxpayers will pay \$5.45 million to protect a First Nations burial ground on tiny Grace Islet.
Photograph By David W Lewis, David Lewis

A demolition team is starting to take down a partially built luxury home on Grace Islet, more than three years after excavators broke ground on the First Nations burial site, sparking protests.

It's the first step toward restoring the sacred site and it's a significant one, said Kathleen Johnnie, lands and resources co-ordinator for the Lyackson First Nation in Chemainus.

"This particular part is probably the most meaningful of everything else that is going to occur, other than making sure the island remains peaceful in the future and untrampled by visitors," Johnnie said.

The Lyackson are among eight coastal First Nations that will watch over the demolition to ensure it is sensitive to the culturally significant site. Tseycum, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Pauquachin, Stz'uminus, Penelakut, Halalt and Cowichan Tribes will participate in the restoration, alongside representatives from the province, Capital Regional District and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

"What they will be working actively to do is to preserve and protect our ancestors from any destructive damage during the deconstruction of the house," Johnnie said, adding some of the other First Nations would take a stronger leadership role in the cultural recovery process.

Johnnie said it's time for the province to protect all First Nations burial grounds, so development interests don't threaten any other sacred sites.

Alberta businessman Barry Slawsky bought the 0.78-acre property in 1990 for \$270,000, with the intention of building his retirement home there.

Exposed human remains were discovered on the islet by kayakers in 2006. Archeologists later documented about 20 burial cairns and cultural features.

Concern over preserving the gravesites heated up after Slawsky began construction on the islet in 2012. Since then, several First Nations, politicians from all levels of government and community members protested the construction, which halted Dec. 18, 2014.

The province bought the property this spring for \$5.45 million to protect the burial ground, including \$4.6 million for losses suffered by Slawsky.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada now holds title and will work with First Nations to restore the grounds.

Brod Demolition won the \$300,000 contract to deconstruct the house, which also includes payment for cultural workers and First Nation representatives.

The process should take about two months.

Ecological conservation will also be a priority on the islet, which features a Garry oak habitat and Douglas fir vegetation, as well as a seagrass meadow offshore.

Conservationists have observed a 200-year-old juniper and rare yellow version of the chocolate lily, said Linda Hannah, regional vice-president in B.C. for the Nature Conservancy.

When demolition is complete, the Nature Conservancy will work with First Nations to develop a management plan for the site, Hannah said.

“That will include consideration of what kind of monitoring needs to be undertaken, what kind of access and signage there will be and what the framework for care and management will be for Grace Islet,” Hannah said.

Salt Spring Island resident Phil Vernon, a member of Protect Grace Islet, helped organize a ceremony Monday to mark the demolition’s start and honour First Nations’ leadership on the islet’s protection. Dozens of residents joined the gathering, where Tsartlip elder Simon Smith Sr. and Cowichan elder Arvid Charlie spoke.

“I think it felt really good for everyone and we listened, once again, to the elders talking about how, although it’s a happy day because things are being resolved, they still feel the weight of sadness for what has happened to their sacred site,” Vernon said.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/first-nations-guide-removal-of-grace-islet-home-on-burial-site-1.2026001#sthash.CunOblnt.dpuf>

B.C. First Nations and Alaskan Natives Join Forces to Fight Border Mines

By [Judith Lavoie](#) • Wednesday, August 12, 2015 - 17:36



A powerful alliance of B.C. First Nations and Southeast Alaska natives has been [forged in the aftermath of the Mount Polley dam collapse](#) and tribes, who have not worked together for generations, are aiming to [put the brakes on B.C.'s border mining boom](#).

Tears flowed after a May meeting in Vancouver when Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) president Grand Chief Stewart Phillip and vice-president Bob Chamberlin agreed to support the newly formed United Tribal Transboundary Mining Work Group in its bid for Alaskan — and particularly tribal — [input into B.C.'s decision-making process on mines](#) along the Southeast Alaska border.

“We are bringing together the tribes from both sides of the border and building a relationship. We can make more noise together than when we are separated by a border that has not been part of our tradition,” said Mike Hoyt, leader of the Teeyhittaan clan from the Stikine River.

It was a historic meeting that could be a catalyst for change, according to Phillip.

“It was very significant, coming together with our brothers and sisters in Alaska. I think it was a long time coming,” he said.

The Transboundary Work Group, made up of federally recognized tribes, conservation groups, fishing advocates and community leaders, will collaborate with B.C. First Nations to let the provincial government, mining companies and investors know their concerns about mines being approved near the headwaters of Southeast Alaska's most important salmon rivers, said Jennifer Hanlon, environmental specialist with the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

“We want them to know (the mines) are a concern for indigenous people. We're talking about our salmon, our health and our lands. Hunting and fishing are still the backbone of our economy,” Hanlon said.

The group wants the issue sent to the [International Joint Commission](#), the body designed to resolve U.S./Canada water and air disputes. The commission operates under the [Boundary Waters Treaty](#) that forbids either nation from polluting waters flowing across the boundary.

“Alaska needs a seat at the table when it comes to deciding whether mining projects in B.C., with the potential to pollute our waters, should go forward and, if they do, how

these mines should deal with their waste, which has a high likelihood of flowing downstream into transboundary rivers,” says one of the group’s briefing notes.

Phillip said when the U.S. and Canadian groups got together there was a “robust discussion” about B.C.’s deregulation and lack of environmental oversight.

The Canadian contingent offered little comfort as they described federal and provincial legislative changes that Phillip believes have gutted the environmental assessment process and removed protections for the vast majority of lakes and rivers.

“Clearly the Harper government is squarely in the corner of big business, big corporations and big oil. They facilitate and fast-track major resource projects at the expense of the environment, wild salmon and marine life,” Phillip said.

However, there are differences of opinion among bands about the extent of mining that is acceptable in northwest B.C. and some First Nations have signed agreements with companies opening mines near the Alaska border.

Among the more controversial is a [co-management agreement](#) between the Tahltan Nation and Imperial Metals, owners of the Red Chris mine and Mount Polley. Tahltan decided to ratify the agreement even though only 12.9 per cent of members voted and elders had previously set up a [blockade](#).

Differences of opinion are inevitable, Phillip said.

“If we were to wait for a unified front, the only ones to benefit would be the mining industry, corporations and government. It doesn’t happen anywhere in the world,” he said.

After the Mount Polley dam breach the B.C. First Nations Energy and Mining Council, like UBCIC, called for major mining and mineral exploration reforms and a larger role for First Nations in environmental assessment and permitting, dam monitoring and water testing.

The council also wants companies to put forward security bonds that represent the true cost of cleaning up a disaster.

“Performance bonds that are required to mitigate and monitor projects in perpetuity are insufficient in major breaches such as the Mount Polley disaster,” said council CEO Dave Porter.

“Mining companies that bring these projects forward should bear the financial burden of mitigation of these potential damages.”

A [report on tailings facility failures](#), released by the council in June, pointed out that mining usually takes place on traditional lands and, if there are dam failures, First Nations are disproportionately affected.

“The principle of free, prior and informed consent must be applied in advance of mining operations, from exploration through all phases of development, including post-closure,” says the report.

Energy and Mines Ministry spokesman David Haslam said the report provides government and industry with a greater understanding of First Nations perspectives on mining and tailings storage and will help inform the upcoming review of the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines.

Mines Minister Bill Bennett told the Globe and Mail that First Nations will have an equal seat at that table with industry and organized labour.

The review is part of government’s response to the report from the expert panel looking into the Mount Polley dam collapse. The panel emphasized the need for change and said that business as usual was not an option.

For Alaskan natives, the bottom line is forcing companies to put in all the safeguards needed to avoid another Mount Polley-type disaster, even if that means no mines beside salmon-bearing rivers or their tributaries.

The relationship with the rivers runs deep, said 84-year-old Ethel Lund, who was born in Wrangell and remembers trading up and down the Stikine River with Canadian First Nations when the king salmon were running or when the eulachon — a small oily fish colloquially known as hooligans in Southeast Alaska — filled the river.

“The Stikine River is very precious to us,” Lund said.

“I worry about the mines and the pollution and I think about the tremendous impact it could have on our communities and waterways. There really is a need for communication between Canada and Alaska to try and work it out, because we are going to be most impacted,” she said.

However, it is not easy to make tribal voices heard, even in Alaska, Hanlon said.

“We have 13 tribes working together to try and protect our ancestral lands and we’ve not been consulted by the B.C. government or the mining companies or even the state of Alaska,” Hanlon said.

But some are optimistic the relationship with the Alaskan government will improve as Lt. Governor Byron Mallott, a member of the Tlingit Nation, becomes increasingly involved.

Mallott, who [visited B.C. to see the Mount Polley spill](#) firsthand and to meet with Energy and Mines Minister Bill Bennett, said in an interview with DeSmog Canada that he hopes to add tribal interests to the government-level task force.

Richard Peterson, president of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska, said the relationship with the tribes has been on a better footing since Mallott's election late last year and he is optimistic that, with the help of Canadian First Nations, a game plan can be developed to protect the rivers and a way of life that dates back thousands of years.

"I think this is one of the most serious things we face right now," Peterson said.

"I know we have an uphill battle, but, when we are arm-in-arm as indigenous people, we can do it."

Direct Link: <http://www.desmog.ca/2015/08/12/b-c-first-nations-and-alaskan-natives-join-forces-fight-border-mines>

Trans Mountain faces 145 energy board conditions for pipeline expansion

By Laura Kane, The Canadian Press August 13, 2015



Kinder Morgan is planning to twin its Trans Mountain Pipeline from Edmonton to Burnaby.

VANCOUVER - The National Energy Board has issued 145 draft conditions that Kinder Morgan must meet if its Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is approved, including increased consultation with First Nations and upgrading its emergency response.

The sweeping requirements were released Wednesday, the same day 35 participants in the board's review said they were dropping out of a "biased" and "unfair" process.

The conditions — which could be changed after NEB hearings — would force the company to hold \$1.1 billion in liability coverage and detail its plans to protect endangered species and reduce emissions.

Many conditions touch on aboriginal consultation. The company would have to file reports about its discussions with First Nations every six months until operations begin and then annually for five years.

Rueben George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation said more consultation does nothing to mitigate the risks to his people or their land along the Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver.

"It's a joke," said George, a band member who runs an initiative opposing the pipeline. "It doesn't address our concerns that we brought up."

An independent review released by the nation in May concluded that a major spill could kill as many as 500,000 birds and foul up to 25 kilometres of shoreline. The Tsleil-Waututh then voted to oppose the pipeline.

Kinder Morgan's \$5.4-billion proposal would triple the bitumen-carrying capacity of the Trans Mountain line with almost 1,000 kilometres of new pipe between Edmonton and Metro Vancouver. The number of tankers in Burrard Inlet each month would increase from five to 34.

Lesly Matthews, the regulatory lead for the Trans Mountain expansion project, said the company will review the conditions and submit comments to the board next week.

The board also wants Kinder Morgan to detail how it would consult with various governments and First Nations on improving its emergency response program.

Other conditions involve the protection of caribou, grizzly bears and marine mammals. Kinder Morgan would also have to create a groundwater monitoring program for all its facilities.

Wednesday's conditions expand on and revise 64 requirements first released last year. The board will hear from participants before issuing a final set of conditions when it makes a recommendation to the federal government in January.

The City of Vancouver will be among the interested parties expected to comment during hearings in September.

Earlier Wednesday, the Wilderness Committee and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, along with 33 citizens, sent a letter to the board withdrawing from the review

because climate change was not considered and citizens wanting to participate were shut out.

"It's a sad day. We do not like to fly in the face of regulatory processes," said Wilderness Committee climate campaigner Eoin Madden. "But we can't abide by the system anymore. It's too flawed."

Peter Wood, terrestrial campaigns director for Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, said the group's voice would best be heard outside the review.

"The NEB will no longer be able to cite our participation as an example of legitimacy or buy-in by the environmental community," he said.

Two other high-profile interveners had already withdrawn. Economist Robyn Allan left the "rigged" process in May, while former BC Hydro chief executive Marc Eliesen called it a "farce" when he pulled out last year.

NEB spokeswoman Tara O'Donovan said she was disappointed by the withdrawals and the board is committed to a thorough environmental review.

"As interveners and commenters in the process they had an opportunity to add their voice to the record, and work to influence the decision of the board."

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Dozens+drop+biased+energy+board+review+Trans+Mountain+pipeline/11284149/story.html#ixzz3inzEFbhu>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Aboriginal child almost abducted: 'Mommy someone tried to take me'

[National News](#) | August 7, 2015 by [Shirley McLean](#) |

APTN National News

A 13-year-old First Nation girl was walking home after visiting friends in downtown Whitehorse Monday when she says someone tried to abduct her in a back alley behind a mall.

“When she called me she was very frantic on the phone and all she could say was ‘mommy somebody tried to take me,’” said the girl’s mom Jennifer Mitchell.

The girls says she was approached by a man driving a grey or turquoise sedan. He stopped, reached out and tried to grab her and pull her into the vehicle, but she took off down a road.

She says he followed her for another three blocks and he finally left her alone after she pulled out her phone to call for help.

“He kept telling her to come to the car and he just reached out and just missed grabbing her,” said Mitchell.

The suspect is not known to the victim and the RCMP are investigating.

“At this stage were looking for more information, but what we do have is that he was reportedly driving a new model sedan so a four-door vehicle either grey or turquoise in colour,” said Const. Julie Fox. “He’s older. Has a dark complexion, white beard and at the time was wearing tanned colored baggy clothing.”

APTN’s Shirley McLean said there’s another report of the same man trying to abduct a different young woman on the same day.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/08/07/aboriginal-child-almost-abducted-mommy-someone-tried-to-take-me/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Native Americans lose fight for long hair in prisons

By the Associated Press | August 9, 2015 | 7:55 PM EDT

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — An appeals court has ruled against Native American inmates in Alabama fighting for the right to wear long hair in accordance with their religious beliefs.

The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals court this week upheld an Alabama prison policy requiring male inmates to keep their hair cut short. The federal judges ruled that the Alabama Department of Corrections had security and hygiene reasons for the policy.

Judges said the court could not force Alabama to accept inmates with long hair even though prisons across the country had done so safely.

Inmates had told the court that their long hair has deep religious significance, and they wanted to keep their hair unshorn because of their beliefs.

"Their sacred and ancestral core religious traditions are at stake," said the inmates' attorney, Mark Sabel of Montgomery.

The prison department did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment on the decision. The department had argued that long hair was a hygiene risk and could be used to conceal weapons and contraband.

The long-running lawsuit was first filed in the 1990s and has been before the 11th Circuit three times.

The U. S. Supreme Court in February kicked the case back for review after ruling the previous month that Arkansas had violated the religious rights of Muslim inmates by forbidding them to grow beards.

Sabel said he thought the 11th Circuit decision was in conflict with the Arkansas case.

Most states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons allow long hair or a religious exemption on grooming policies, said Joel West Williams, staff attorney with the Native American Rights Fund.

"The evidence is that 39 jurisdictions allow long hair and do so safely," Williams said.

The appeals court said many well-run prisons see the benefit of allowing inmates to follow the grooming practices of their religion but that Alabama had to decide for itself if it was worth the risks.

The department of corrections "may, of course, decide in the future that these costs and risks might be worth absorbing, especially in view of the high value that long hair holds for many religious inmates," the judges wrote.

Sabel said he is considering his next step, which could include asking for a hearing by all 11th Circuit judges or another appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Direct Link: <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/native-americans-lose-fight-long-hair-prisons>

Native Americans rally to retire Skowhegan high school mascot

The mostly quiet gathering reiterates opposition to the high school's use of the 'Indians' mascot.

By Doug Harlow Morning Sentinel, August 7



A woman holding a sign urging Skowhegan to change the mascot at the local high school waves on Thursday to a supporter in Skowhegan. Staff photo by Michael G. Seamans

SKOWHEGAN — A rally of Native Americans and supporters of retiring the “Indians” sports mascot at Skowhegan Area High School was mostly quiet Thursday night, but there was no doubt that two opposing camps were present during Moonlight Madness, a part of Skowhegan’s annual six-day River Fest.

Maulian Smith, who grew up and still lives and works on Indian Island in Penobscot County, organized the rally. She said the purpose of the gathering was to show support for Skowhegan-area residents who want to change what she called the last racist and offensive Maine high school mascot.



Jeff Stewart of Old Town joins a Native American rally Thursday during Moonlight Madness, a part of Skowhegan’s annual River Fest. The gathering was held to show support for those who want the “Indians” sports mascot changed at Skowhegan Area High School. Michael G. Seamans/Morning Sentinel



Mike Walton of Clinton plays his drum Thursday during a Native American rally at the Moonlight Madness festival on Water Street in Skowhegan. Staff photo by Michael G. Seamans

Smith, along with her father, Barry Dana of Solon, the former chief of the Penobscot Nation, and others stood around tables with printed educational material as Moonlight Madness roared around them. Later, about 20 people stood in a circle, passing a drum baton – a talking stick – and expressing their feelings on the sensitive issue.

When it was his turn to speak, Dana said the important part of Thursday's gathering was to educate people that it's not OK to first steal someone's land, and then steal their heritage.

"It's not a good thing for us to always have to explain to our children and then our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren why (Skowhegan teams) call themselves Indians," Dana said. "That's not how we're honored. We still stand here seeking a relationship, seeking understanding, seeking a correct course of action because we owe it to our children and our grandchildren."

Supporters of keeping "Indians" as the Skowhegan high mascot and name attended Moonlight Madness wearing T-shirts proclaiming "I bleed orange & black – Skowhegan Indian pride," but none chose to stop and talk to the group.

Jennifer Poirier, a member of the Skowhegan-based School Administrative District 54 school board who in May voted against changing the name, wore the T-shirt, as did her husband. She said there was no need to stop and debate the matter, which has been a subject of controversy for months.

"That booth is for their supporters and they have every right to protest, rally, demonstrate, whatever you want to call it," Poirier said. "That's fine, but we have our right to walk around and do our community part as well. We're not looking for any kind of conflict. We want everybody to stay respectful, and everybody has a right to their own opinion."

Ron Gordon disagreed with what Dana was saying and began shouting.

“I’ve got as much right to speak as that man does,” Gordon said loudly. “He wants to misguide you. He has no business running off his mouth about the Indians. This landmark is an honor to the Indians to be named Skowhegan Indians. The name will never change.”

Maulian Smith, who is human resources director at Penobscot Indian Nation Enterprises/Federal Program Integrators, said she received some threatening messages before Thursday’s rally saying she’s not wanted in Skowhegan and that she “should be careful.”

“But I’ve also had a lot of encouraging messages, saying not to let that deter me,” she said.

Other than Gordon, there was no other disruption.

The issue of removing the Indians mascot and name from the last high school in the state to have them has been a contentious one, reaching a peak in May when the school board voted 11-9 to keep the name and mascot.

Letters have been sent by tribal leaders to the state commissioner of education and to members of the State Board of Education, to the SAD 54 school board and to the Maine Press Association.

The letters say the same thing: Please stop using the word “Indians” when referring to Skowhegan Area High School sports teams.

Doctors, lawyers, educators and business leaders have called on the school district to drop the name because it offends the very people it is meant to honor – Maine’s Indian tribes.

Others in the community, including many SAD 54 board members, are holding fast to their belief that keeping the Indians mascot name is their heritage and what they say is their way of channeling the power and strength of the people who first settled on the banks of the Kennebec River, which runs through Skowhegan.

Neither side is budging in the debate, which in the last year has turned ugly with accusations of racism, insults and intimidation. Members of Maine’s tribes say use of the name and images are an insult to their heritage and an affront to the history of the region where tribal members were slaughtered.

Direct Link: <http://www.pressherald.com/2015/08/06/native-americans-rally-over-skowhegan-mascot/>

Students paint the Rock discouraging Boy Scout use of Native American culture on campus

By [Catherine Ferland](#) and [Ryan Kryska](#) | Published 08/07/15 1:22pm



The rock depicts a message to the Boy Scouts of America, who are currently on campus for the National Order of the Arrow Conference. The group of students express disdain for the use of Native American imagery and culture in the Order of the Arrow traditions. Catherine Ferland/ The State News

By [Catherine Ferland](#) / The State News

Amidst the 2015 [National Order of the Arrow Conference](#) on campus this week, students [have taken issue](#) to the Boy Scout's use of Native American culture and imagery.

Anthropology senior Hayley Cook and alumnus Dan Grenzicki set out to paint the Rock on Farm Lane at 11 p.m. on Thursday. Their goal was to raise awareness of Native American cultural appropriation onset by the Boy Scouts of America. The scouts, however, had a different view on their painting.

"It turned into this whole other thing because every single group of Boy Scouts that we saw would yell at us in some way," Cook said, who is also an intern for the Native

Americans Institute and Mohawk, Iroquois Nation ethnicity from upstate New York. “It ranged from asking if I had pegs on my bike, could they get on, to calling me a weird-looking boy because I have short hair — just crazy things that are not even relevant.”

Cook said her and Grenzicki painted the Rock until 3 a.m., and the scouts remained present throughout.

“They went out of their way to sit at the rock in the middle of the night, after their camp schedule, to heckle us at the Rock. We were like, ‘this is like a camp, don’t they have stuff to do in the morning or curfews?’ I’ve worked in the dorms. I know camps do curfews or else they get in trouble,” Cook said.



A tour guide explains the Rock to a group of incoming students and their parents August 7, 2015. They explained how some messages can sometimes be political or social critiques. Catherine Ferland/ The State News

“So many of the leaders were equally disrespectful, if not more than the boys. One of them I told, ‘Hey you have a problem here, your scouts have been harassing us through everything that we are doing.’ He first said it wasn’t his problem, ‘this is a youth led organization. We can’t be held responsible for what our scouts are doing.’ He then suggested that the harassment was in my head and it wasn’t actually happening. It spiraled into a whole other thing that we weren’t really expecting,” Cook said.

“They were all really open about who they were,” Grenzicki said. “There was a bunch of confederate flag patches floating around too. They were all trading them. We went to the patch trading in front of Brody for a project. They had a bunch of really appropriate patches of Native Americans and about five confederate flag patches. They were like ‘these are really rare, do you know how much these are to get right now?’ There were certain kids actively seeking out only those patches,” Grenzicki said.

The following scouts were spoken to on Friday afternoon, they were not known to be at the Rock during the Thursday night painting:

John Quimby, an Eagle Scout from Conn., said, "I've grown up in the Native community. It is just a touchy subject and it should be changed. They are trying to go for an image that is old and outdated. What I was taught in Boy Scouts and what I learned at the powwows were completely different."

Quimby said he has spent a lot of time at powwows and was adopted into Native American tribes, even though he is of Filipino descent.

Jasper Wallen, 19-year-old assistant Scoutmaster from Idaho, said, "I don't always feel happy about the ways that we act as Native Americans. But we do have Native American tribe leaders that watch over and make sure that we are doing it respectfully. It is not really the racist thing that a lot of people think."

Cooper Hanks, 15-year-old Life Scout from Idaho, said, "It is not offensive, it is more an inclusion. It is like any Christian group that tries to bring people in. Let's learn about each other's religions and beliefs and be respectful. Even if you don't believe in it, see what they see and don't be negative."

Direct Link: <http://statenews.com/article/2015/08/students-paint-the-rock-discouraging-boy-scout-use-of-native-american-culture>

Native Americans gather to support the Sanders campaign

by: [Andrea Perkins](#)

August 7 2015



When Bernie Sanders held that nationwide live stream event, my community center, the [American Indian Center of Chicago](#) (AIC), was asked by the Sanders campaign to be one of the meeting places for his event.

We had about 150 people for the event -- filling up the largest room in the building! Natives and non-Natives during the 20-minute countdown expressed reasons why they were interested in Sanders. They spoke of "higher wages for the working class," and "taxing the rich." Some spoke of how mainstream media isn't talking about Bernie enough

and when they do it isn't very informative about his politics. While all this was being said, I was happy to notice the range in age and race of those in attendance. And there was a high level of enthusiasm from people signing up to volunteer and make donations to the campaign -- some of the strongest I have seen.

The countdown ended and [Bernie Sanders](#) walked out, wasting no time with boring opening statements. He opened his speech strong and coined a new hashtag for the night: #EnoughIsEnough. He talked about how too many people are living in poverty. Bernie said " We cannot continue to maintain a starvation minimum wage." Bernie continued to talk about how every person should receive healthcare, paid time off, maternity leave, and free education.

I think one of the moments that stood out the most and got the most applause and adoration from the group was when he spoke of police brutality. Sanders said, " We're tired of seeing black people yanked to the ground and assaulted ...We have to combat institutionalized racism in the U.S." Bernie ended this statement with a bold #EnoughIsEnough.

Bernie went on to talk about the need for a new "political revolution" and "strong grassroots organizing." At the end of program, the Sanders campaign asked viewers to send out a mass text message with the word WORK to sign up to volunteer.

I hope that the level of enthusiasm continues and grows in new and unexpected ways. I'm hoping that at some point during this election season Native Americans are going to be able to directly ask questions of the presidential candidates. I want to know how Bernie Sanders is going to address the issues facing Natives. If his campaign can keep up this energy around Bernie, I feel that he might have a real chance to win this.

Direct Link: <http://peoplesworld.org/native-americans-gather-to-support-the-sanders-campaign/>

Native American veterans to gather at Cantigny in Wheaton

8/8/2015 7:38 AM



Hundreds of Native American veterans from across the country will gather Aug. 29 and 30 at Cantigny Park in Wheaton to celebrate the contributions American Indians have made to the military.

[Jessica Cilella](#)

Hundreds of Native American veterans will gather Aug. 29 and 30 at [Cantigny Park](#) in Wheaton to celebrate and remember what some say is the "untold story" of American Indians' contributions to the U.S. military.

"On our reservations they're recognized in regular weekly or monthly opportunities, but outside of the reservation there's not a whole lot of people who recognize the contribution that our people have given," event organizer Joseph Podlasek said.

If you go

What: National Gathering of Native Veterans

Where: Cantigny Park, 1S151 Winfield Road, Wheaton

When: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, and 9 a.m. to noon, Sunday, Aug. 30

Cost: Free for all veterans; public free Saturday, \$5 Sunday

Why: To celebrate contributions by Native American veterans

Some of the most notable contributions include the use of Native American languages in military communications during various wars to prevent messages from being deciphered by the enemy.

Podlasek -- who also serves as CEO of the Schaumburg-based [Trickster Gallery](#), which displays Native American and cultural art -- said the [National Gathering of Native Veterans](#) will be the first event of its kind, drawing about 1,000 veterans from across the nation.

"The bottom line is really to say thank you to the native vets and to hear their story and to welcome people in," he said. "We want people to come in and enjoy the day with us, sit down and talk to a vet."

The first day of the event is free to the public. Everyone is invited to attend the opening ceremony at 11 a.m., where all veterans, native and nonnative, will be recognized.

Podlasek stressed that the ceremony is not a pow wow, but will feature many colorful pieces of Native American culture, such as awards for native color guards, an explanation of the Eagle Staff and native music played on the drums by the Pokagon tribe.

"For us, pow wows are a big thing in our culture, but veterans have a lot of responsibilities when we do a pow wow," he said. "That's why we're doing it a little bit different."

Veterans can sit back as several guest speakers make presentations, including World War II and Korean War veteran [Charles Norman Shay](#), who served as a combat medic and advocated for the creation of a Native American Heritage Day.

Native musicians, including [Gabriel Ayala](#) and [Wade Fernandez](#), will perform throughout the day and artist and poet [Bunky Echo-Hawk](#) will put on a live art performance. Native arts and crafts vendors will have their work on display too. Kids can get their faces painted and walk through an American Indian village with a guide.

Veterans and national leaders will meet from 9 a.m. to noon on Aug. 30, to discuss several issues affecting native veterans. Members of the public are invited to the meeting, but must pay \$5 to enter.

"It will really be a policy-drive day with people from Washington, D.C., policymakers there to come listen to the veterans' voices," Podlasek said.

Topics that will be covered include cultural wellness, views on healing and spirituality and working with Western methodologies at hospitals, and economic development and job success.

Videographers will be present during the event, recording the activities and veterans' stories in preparation for a documentary. Podlasek has plans to pass the videos along to "as many educational venues as we can," including several area colleges and high schools that he has already been in contact with.

Volunteers are still needed for the event. Podlasek is encouraging Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops to consider coming out to help. For information, contact Podlasek at JoeP@TricksterGallery.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20150808/news/150809141/>

Bill introduced to help increase Native American voting

By Melissa Krause mkrause@willistonherald.com

Aug 7, 2015

WILLISTON — In an effort to help raise voting numbers of the Native American population, U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) helped introduce legislation that will help improve voter access at the polls as well as increase voter protections.

According to the National Congress of American Indians, the Native American voter turnout was 17 percent less than non-Native voters in 2012.

Living in more rural communities, many Native Americans have to travel great distances to get to a voting booth. Even though many states list tribal ID as a valid form of identification to vote, often, the Native population is turned away when trying to exercise their right to vote.

Heitkamp's Native American Voting Rights Act looks to correct the issues that have been seen in the past by the Native population.

The legislation will require each state to establish polling locations on reservations, if requested by the tribe. It will mandate that each state must accept tribal ID as valid form of identification. The legislation will also include early voting locations, if the state of voting allows early ballots to be cast prior to Election Day. It will finally require state officials to send absentee ballots to the registered voters if requested by the tribe.

"One of the things that we know is that the most precious right we have as citizens of this country is the right to vote. Unfortunately, frequently, that right has been denied historically in Indian country," said Heitkamp.

Under the Voting Rights Act, the bill will expand provisions and require the U.S. Attorney General to enforce tribal voting protections. If the voter meets state and federal requirements but is denied the right to vote, the bill will require poll observers to oversee and ensure that voters are allowed to cast their vote.

Heitkamp is backed by Senators Jon Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), and Al Franken (D-MN), who also introduced the bill.

“This is a critical piece of civil rights that has to be addressed in my state and really all across Indian country” said Heitkamp.

Direct Link: http://www.willistonherald.com/community/bill-introduced-to-help-increase-native-american-voting/article_8cac0ad8-3d01-11e5-86c4-0bf659951cb0.html

Fight for Jim Thorpe's remains continues 62 years later

[Erik Brady](#), USA TODAY Sports 4:52 p.m. EDT August 8, 2015

The sons of famed American Indian athlete Jim Thorpe have long fought to get the remains of their father moved from the Pennsylvania town named for him to tribal lands in Oklahoma. But Jim Thorpe isn't letting its Olympic go without a fight. (Sept AP)



JIM THORPE, Pa. — The man this borough is named for lived one of the most astonishing lives of the 20th Century. Remarkably, his story in death is even more astonishing — and very much alive.

Jim Thorpe, the man, is buried in Jim Thorpe, the place — though the man had never been to the place while breathing. Whether his remains will remain in a roadside mausoleum here, as an appeals court ruled, or can be repatriated to the Sac and Fox Nation in Oklahoma, as the tribe hopes, is now up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Chances are the appeals court ruling will stand, as the high court gets roughly 10,000 petitions each year and hears oral arguments in fewer than 100 of them. Even so, what are long odds to a man born in American Indian territory in the 1880s who'd one day win Olympic gold medals, play big-league baseball and emerge as an early star of pro football?

This is the story of perhaps the greatest athlete in recorded history and how his octogenarian sons are trying to bring him home for a traditional Sac and Fox burial that was interrupted 62 years ago by their father's third wife, who arrived with police to spirit his corpse away in a hearse.

The story revolves around Mauch Chunk and East Mauch Chunk — onetime coalmining towns in northeastern Pennsylvania that agreed to merge and rename themselves as part of an unusual arrangement with Patricia Thorpe after her husband's 1953 death. The story also revolves around the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), enacted by Congress in 1990 to rectify the longstanding plunder of American Indian burial grounds by making it possible for remains and sacred objects to be returned to descendants and tribes.

"It was dad's wish to be laid to rest on Native American land where he was born," Bill Thorpe tells USA TODAY Sports. "He told me. He told my brothers. And I just think we should honor his wishes."

William Schwab, an attorney who represents the borough, says there's no record of this wish. Even so, he says, the borough might very well accede to the brothers' wishes if the family were united on this. Bill, 87, and Richard, 83, Jim Thorpe's sons from his second marriage, want their father's remains returned to Oklahoma; John Thorpe, a grandson from his first marriage, does not. (Jim Thorpe and Patricia, known as Patsy, did not have children.)

Stephen Ward, an attorney who represents the Sac and Fox Nation as well as Bill and Richard Thorpe, says the answer is simple — the borough should keep the name and the mausoleum, just not the remains.

That doesn't work for Jack Kmetz of the Jim Thorpe Area Hall of Fame. "Without him," he says, "we're not Jim Thorpe anymore."

Ward rejects that reasoning.

"The borough seems to be taking somewhat the view that his remains are some sort of mascot," he says. "Because it is an Indian, somebody thinks the remains belong to them and they own them. That's what NAGPRA was intended to address."

American Indians buried on federal land were long viewed as "archeological resources" and many museums routinely collected Native American remains and funerary items such as burial clothes and jewelry. NAGPRA provides lineal descendants and affiliated tribes a process for repatriation from museums, which the law defines as any institution or state or local government agency that receives federal funds and has possession of or control over Native American cultural items.

U.S. District Court Judge A. Richard Caputo ruled in 2013 that the borough is a museum under that definition. But last fall a panel of the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled

that “interpreting ‘museum’ to include a gravesite that Thorpe’s widow intended as Thorpe’s final resting place” would be an absurd result and reversed the district court under the rarely used absurdity doctrine.

The Thorpe brothers and the Sac and Fox Nation petitioned the Supreme Court in June to overturn the appeals court. Ward, their attorney, says native people have long struggled to have their religious practices and burial customs respected, and he says the high court should take the case to solidify the meaning of NAGPRA as well as to clarify the absurdity doctrine.

Schwab, who represents the borough, says the appeals court found that spousal rights trump tribal rights and he expects the high court to see it the same way.

“We don’t think this is a case for the Supreme Court to hear,” he says. “We see this as the tribe coming up with facts that are not in the record. I’m seeing this as the case they wish they had, rather than the actual facts of the case.”



Jim Thorpe was buried in the cities formerly known as Mauch Chunk and East Mauch Chunk shortly after his death in 1953. (Photo: Bill Streicher, USA TODAY Sports)

‘GREATEST ATHLETE’

The story goes that when Thorpe won the decathlon and the pentathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Games, Sweden’s King Gustav told him, “Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world.” The royal sentiment is etched on mausoleum marble.

The International Olympic Committee would ultimately strip Thorpe of his medals for playing semipro baseball for as little as \$2 per game in the years before competing in the Games, thereby rendering him a professional in the since-discredited era of amateurism. The IOC returned the medals nearly 30 years after his death.

Thorpe burst to fame as an All-America running back at Carlisle Indian School in central Pennsylvania, roughly 100 miles from his future burial site. In 1911, he scored all of his team’s points in an 18-15 upset of Harvard. In 1912, after his Olympic triumphs, Thorpe ran roughshod in a big win against Army. Dwight Eisenhower, who played for Army that day, said Thorpe “could do anything better than any other football player I ever saw.”

Grantland Rice put it more poetically: “He moved like a breeze.” More poetic yet was his Thunder Clan name, Wa-tha-huk — “The Bright Path the Lightning Makes as It Goes Across the Sky.”

Thorpe played six seasons of Major League Baseball, mostly for the New York Giants, batting .252, while also playing pro football (for the Canton Bulldogs and others) so well that he was an inaugural member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame 10 years after his death. In 2000, ABC’s *Wide World of Sports* anointed Thorpe as athlete of the century ahead of luminaries such as Babe Ruth, Muhammad Ali and Michael Jordan.

But Thorpe’s personal life did not match his athletic career. He struggled for years with alcoholism. He married three times; the first two ended in divorce. He was married to his third wife at the time of his death, though Bill Thorpe says his father was estranged from Patsy by then. Schwab says there is no record of that.

Thorpe died of a heart attack at age 64 in California in March 1953 — without a will. Sandra Massey, Sac and Fox historic preservation officer, says it is a profound misunderstanding of their culture to expect wills and other written records.

Bill Thorpe says his siblings and Patsy agreed to burial in Oklahoma and preparations were made for a traditional three-day ceremony under tribal customs and traditions. But Patsy arrived during a ritual feast the night before burial, evidently upset that the governor had vetoed a state appropriation to build a memorial near the gravesite.

“It was in the middle of a dinner ceremony,” Bill Thorpe says. “I guess you’d call it a goodbye dinner. And Patsy comes in with mortuary people and some police and took his body. And there wasn’t a thing we could do, being as how she was the wife. We tried to say, ‘Hey, don’t do this.’”

Massey — whose mother, Henrietta, attended the interrupted feast — says police had no authority on tribal lands and she calls the body-taking “psychic terror.” She says her people believe Thorpe’s spirit cannot be at peace until the full ceremony is concluded.

“Death ceremonies are a process,” she says. “What happens if the process is not completed? We never had to contemplate that before. We think he is in limbo.”

Bill Thorpe says Patsy Thorpe shopped his father’s corpse across the country for a year before making a cash deal, sometimes reported as \$500. “She was paid I think under-the-table type,” he says.

Grandson John Thorpe says there’s no record of any payment and he personally searched for one. Schwab calls the allegation that Patsy was paid no more than folklore.

“When we hear serious legal issues and human rights issues dismissed as folklore, that’s offensive to the Sac and Fox people and this legal team,” Ward says. “The borough’s

position is it's folklore because it's not written down. That's a misunderstanding of Indian traditions. They didn't have contracts; histories weren't written."

John Thorpe believes Patsy was looking not for money but for a place that would honor the memory of her husband in grand fashion, as his home state had failed to do, though pie-in-the-sky plans for a stadium and a cancer center in Pennsylvania never materialized.

Ward says the interment agreement specifies that Patsy and her heirs will not remove the remains as long as the borough keeps the name Jim Thorpe.

"But Bill and the rest of the family are not her heirs," Ward says.



Bill Thorpe says his father's third wife shopped Jim Thorpe's body around before settling on Mauch Chunk and East Mauch Chunk in Pennsylvania. (Photo: Jerome Miron, USA TODAY Sports)

A FAMILY DISPUTE?

Suzan Shown Harjo, co-author of *My Father's Bones*, a play about the Thorpe case, was lead petitioner in the original trademark case against the team name of Washington's NFL club. She sees certain similarities between the cases.

In one, she says, Washington team owner Daniel Snyder asserts ownership of the term "Redskins" — and, by extension, she says, of Native Americans — and in the other the borough professes a sort of ownership of Thorpe's remains.

"Dan Snyder owns a team, and he thinks he owns us," Harjo says. "In Pennsylvania, their sense of ownership is very clear. They're saying, 'This is our property. We paid good money for him and we put his name on our town, and now he's ours.' That's exactly what the repatriation law is there to stop — these roadside attractions to exploit people long after they're dead, almost like a peep show."

My Father's Bones imagines the case through the memories of Thorpe's sons, including Jack Thorpe, who sued to reclaim his father's remains in 2010. Jack died a year later, and

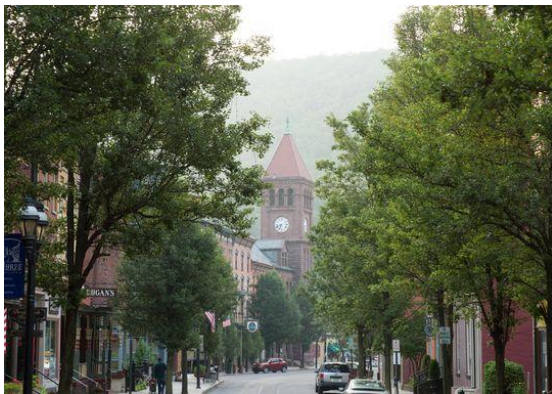
Bill and Richard joined the suit. But grandsons from Thorpe's first marriage — Mike Koehler, who since died, and John Thorpe — filed friend-of-the-court briefs in opposition.

"Patricia Thorpe made the decision, and that should be the end of it," says attorney Daniel Wheeler, who represents John Thorpe.

"Somehow the tribe has gotten involved in this," John Thorpe says. "I believe this to be a family matter. I know my grandpa is a nationally recognized hero, so it's difficult to keep this a family matter, but at the basis of it, that's what it is."

The appeals court panel said as much when it ruled NAGPRA "was intended as a shield against further injustices to Native Americans. It was not intended to be wielded as a sword to settle familial disputes."

Ward says the NAGPRA repatriation process includes opportunity for family members and others to state their positions before a decision is reached. Still, he says, "The tribe's and the sons' interests would carry more weight than more distant relatives who are not members of the tribe. ... In our view it is ludicrous to say this is a family dispute. We have support from a great majority of the lineal heirs of Bill's father."



Jim Thorpe, Pa., is now thriving on tourism, including hiking, biking and whitewater rafting. (Photo: Bill Streicher, USA TODAY Sports)

JIM THORPE, PA., THRIVES

Mauch Chunk and East Mauch Chunk were prosperous places that fell on hard times as oil replaced coal. The Thorpe tomb never did become the tourist attraction that townspeople had hoped for when they merged, but today the region thrives on tourism — hiking, biking and whitewater rafting in and around one of the most beautiful small towns in America.

Kmetz, of the local sports hall of fame, says Jim Thorpe, the place, honors Jim Thorpe, the man.

“Our town is named after the greatest athlete who ever lived,” he says. “Nobody else can say that. ... What’s left to argue over? They had first shot (to bury Thorpe in Oklahoma) and rightfully so, but the governor reneged on it. We have a signed contract from his wife. What they claim their father said doesn’t hold the same water as the contract we have in our hands.”

Kmetz thinks NAGPRA should not apply to Jim Thorpe — man or place. “Calling us a museum is way out of bounds,” he says. “There’s no doors at the mausoleum.”

The burial site is set on a knoll on Route 903. There are a pair of statues — Thorpe with a football and Thorpe with a discus — plus historical signposts sketching out that astonishing life story.

David and Michella Priest and their daughter Madelena visited recently, on vacation from Waunakee, Wisc. They learned of the burial site only after they’d arrived in nearby Lake Harmony.

“I’d never heard of Jim Thorpe before,” Michella Priest says.

They knew nothing about how Thorpe came to be here — or about how his sons hope to take him home.

“Wow,” David Priest says. “That’s a crazy story.”

Direct Link: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/2015/08/08/jim-thorpe-pennsylvania-supreme-court-remains-nagpra/31341409/>

Documentary Explores Struggle of New Jersey’s Ramapough Tribe

By TAMMY LA GORCEAUG. 8, 2015



A gathering of Ramapough, from the film “American Native.” Credit Steven Oritt

Corey Bobker was an accomplished 30-something adult when he took his first drive into the Ramapo Mountains in 2010. But the 12-year-old version of him still had knots in his stomach.

“When I was a kid growing up, everybody knew you don’t go up into the mountains because you’d get shot,” said Mr. Bobker, producer of the documentary “[American Native](#).” His film explores the struggles of the Ramapough Lenape Nation, a Native American tribe with about 5,000 members, according to its chief, Dwaine C. Perry. The Ramapough live mostly across the Stag Hill region of Mahwah, Ringwood and nearby Hillburn, N.Y.

Mr. Bobker, of Los Angeles, grew up in Livingston. As a child, he attended summer camp in Stanhope, near the Ramapos in Mahwah. He had not gotten close to the mysterious mountain chain again until this anxiety-ridden car trip to visit with the tribe for the first time. “I was definitely worried,” he said. “I thought, Maybe it’s true — maybe they’re going to confront us if we say something the wrong way.”

Mr. Bobker’s traveling partner, Steven Oritt, also from Los Angeles and the director of “American Native,” has a vivid memory of their first visit.

“One of the first things the chief said to me was, ‘What are you?’ ” Mr. Oritt said. When Mr. Oritt told Mr. Perry, a Vietnam War veteran and, for the last 10 years, the elected chief of the Ramapough, that he was Jewish, Mr. Perry posed a question: If a few of Mr. Oritt’s ancestors were not 100 percent Jewish, would that make him any less Jewish? Mr. Oritt replied that it would not. “He said, ‘Now you know where my people are coming from,’ ” Mr. Oritt recalled.

Despite the filmmakers’ challenging first encounter with the Ramapough, the result, five years later, is an 84-minute documentary chronicling the tribe’s quest for respect and recognition. Made for \$262,000, “American Native” has been shown at several film festivals since last spring and recently won the award for best documentary at the [Manchester Film Festival](#) in July. In September, “American Native” will be shown at [the Clairidge Cinema](#), in Montclair and [the Warner Theater](#), in Ridgewood.

Mr. Bobker said the filmmakers spent close to a year convincing Ramapough leaders, particularly Mr. Perry, that a documentary would give them “a voice to tell people who they are,” he said.

Mr. Perry questioned their sincerity. “I told them, ‘Yeah, sure, I’ve heard that before,’ ” he said recently, from within a still-under-construction house of worship on a 13-acre parcel of land in Mahwah owned by the tribe. His skepticism stemmed from being disappointed by past articles in [Weird NJ](#), [The New Yorker](#) and other publications, as well as the tribe’s portrayal in a 2013 movie, “[Out of the Furnace](#),” which provoked a small faction of Ramapoughs to sue for \$50 million, claiming defamation. The film depicted them as “scumbags and inbreds,” Mr. Perry said. The lawsuit was unsuccessful.



Steven Oritt, its director. Credit Fred R. Conrad for The New York Times

Folklore surrounding the Ramapough, including the stories that caused Mr. Bobker to think twice about leaving his camp bunk in his youth, has inspired others in entertainment. “[The Red Road](#),” a recent series on Sundance TV, was based on the tribe and concerned tensions between its people and the surrounding community.

Though the television show was fictional, the tensions are real. Mr. Perry said “bigotry and good-old-boy Southern-style politics” had prevented the Ramapough from obtaining permits to complete the house of worship in Mahwah.

The heritage of the Ramapough is tangled in rumor and myth. Theories about their multiracial ancestry have centered around freed black slaves, Dutch settlers and the Lenape Delaware Indians, who fled to the mountains in the late 17th century to escape Dutch and English settlers. New York and New Jersey recognized the tribe in 1980 as the Ramapough Lenape Nation. When Mr. Perry finally agreed to the documentary, it was in an effort, he said, to “try once again to let the truth come out, to let people know the bigger story is about the haves and the have-nots, which has always been the story of the native peoples of this land.”

“American Native” tracks multiple generations. Cameras follow a young Ramapough, Devynn Mann, through the halls of West Milford High School, where she talks with a teacher about “Jackson Whites,” a local term and racial slur referring to the Ramapough.

Mr. Perry, 67, is shown in Trenton, attending a hearing about a bill to bolster state recognition and encountering concerns that if it were granted, the Ramapough would consider opening a casino. “We don’t have any interest in a casino,” he said. The bill, still pending during shooting, eventually passed the General Assembly but never made it to the Senate floor.

The film also closely follows a bid for recognition at the federal level, initiated by the Ramapough in 1978. If granted, it would provide benefits and subsidies that would help stem what Mr. Perry called the “fiscal attrition” of the Ramapough. “Taxes go up in this area and our people have to move,” he said. “That happens a lot.”

Although they said they do not have an agenda, the filmmakers would like to see the tribe win federal recognition, and they hope “American Native” opens a dialogue similar to the

one posed by Mr. Perry five years ago about Mr. Oritt's Jewish heritage, Mr. Oritt said. "Selfishly speaking, I want the film to get as much exposure as it can," he said. "But I also hope it gets people to dig a little deeper when they're thinking about issues of race and identity."

Screenings of "American Native" will take place at the Clairidge Cinema in Montclair on Sept. 16 at 7:30 p.m. and at the Warner Theater in Ridgewood on Sept. 17 at 7:30 p.m. For more information: americannative-themovie.com. To learn about other screenings: <http://gathr.us/films/american-native>.

Direct Link: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/09/nyregion/documentary-explores-struggle-of-new-jerseys-ramapough-tribe.html?_r=0

UN Special Rapporteur: 'Indigenous Peoples Should Be Regarded as Allies'

[Victoria Tauli-Corpuz](#)

8/10/15

The following is a statement by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, during the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples which was held yesterday, August 9.

As we celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples this 9th of August 2015, we look back into what has been achieved the past years and envisage what can be done for the future. Barely a year ago, in the U.N. General Assembly convened the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and adopted an Outcome Document by consensus.

As the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples I take seriously the commitments made by the States contained in the Outcome Document. Paragraph 7 where governments said, "We commit ourselves to taking, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, appropriate measures at the national level, including legislative, policy and administrative measures, to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to promote awareness of it among all sectors of society, including members of legislatures, the judiciary and the civil service. " States should demonstrate political will and seriousness in the implementation of their commitments and their human rights obligations.

Almost seven years have passed since the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly. Indigenous Peoples demand that the Declaration and the WCIP Outcome Document be properly implemented. In my capacity as the Special Rapporteur, I continue to receive many reports from Indigenous Peoples on

how their rights, enshrined in the UN Declaration and ILO Convention No. 169 are still blatantly violated not only by states but increasingly by private actors like corporations.

The assertion of Indigenous Peoples of their rights and their resistance against incursions into their lands by extractive industries and land grabbers has strengthened. However, systematic violation of their rights ranging from arbitrary arrests, labeling of indigenous organizations, leaders and activists as terrorist organizations as terrorists, torture and extrajudicial killings still continue. Their lack of access to basic social services and the violation of their cultural rights remain appalling. Violence against indigenous women is still pervasive in many countries. Reports show a high representation in jails of indigenous women in countries like Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand and in these same countries, missing and murdered indigenous women is a stark reality. Many indigenous children are not able to finish primary school and indigenous women's access to health care services is still limited. All these will undercut the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals which will be adopted soon.

Increasing foreign investments coming into many countries further exacerbate the loss of lands and resources of Indigenous Peoples and serious environmental destruction of their territories. Violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples are worsening because of the continuing implementation of neoliberalism and extractivism as well as increasing foreign investments agreed upon in more than 2,700 state-to-state bilateral investment treaties (BITs). Indigenous Peoples' right and capacity to pursue their own economic, social and cultural development is still very much challenged.

Where lies the hope for Indigenous Peoples? There is an increasing number of indigenous communities, organizations, institutions and networks which are strengthening their capacities to get the States and corporations to implement the U.N. Declaration and ILO Convention No. 169. Such efforts include awareness raising on their rights; designing and implementing their own development paths; doing community participatory mapping and resource inventories and developing and using participatory monitoring tools to measure the extent of implementation of the legal instruments and the agreed Sustainable Development Goals; using and transmitting traditional knowledge systems; waging campaigns on various issues and strengthening their own movements at all levels.

I urge Indigenous Peoples to multiply several times over these efforts. They should use more effectively relevant legal instruments and engage actively with the U.N. mechanisms on Indigenous Peoples. These include the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and my mandate, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I urge States to seriously implement the U.N. Declaration and the ILO Convention No. 169 and the commitments they made in the WCIP Outcome Document. A substantial decrease in violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples will lead towards more peaceful indigenous communities and better chances of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Indigenous Peoples should be regarded as allies and partners of States and the U.N. as well as other multilateral bodies in addressing climate change, stopping the

erosion of biodiversity, enhancing cultural diversity and achieving the SDGs. The contributions of Indigenous Peoples in addressing the global ecological and cultural crises cannot and should not be underestimated.

I urge the U.N. bodies, agencies, programs and funds to implement the U.N. Declaration and their own policies or guidelines on how they will work with Indigenous Peoples. Coherence and complementation between you all in implementing the Declaration and developing and implementing a System-wide Action Plan on Indigenous Peoples should be enhanced. The human rights based approach to development and the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Issues should guide you in all the work you do with Indigenous Peoples.

I also urge corporations to adhere to the Guidelines on Business and Human Rights and their own guidelines on free, prior and informed consent.

Let us all celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples by demonstrating our collective political will to address the serious implementation gap in relation to the UN Declaration and the ILO Convention No. 169. Long live the indigenous Peoples all over the world!

Read more at <https://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/10/un-special-rapporteur-indigenous-peoples-should-be-regarded-allies-161342>

World's Indigenous Peoples day recognized in Tucson

Posted: Aug 09, 2015 10:38 PM MST Updated: Aug 10, 2015 6:03 AM MST
By Craig Reck



TUCSON, AZ (Tucson News Now) -

Dozens of people packed into the Global Justice Center on E 26th Street in Tucson on Sunday to raise awareness and celebrate the International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples.

The day-long event welcomed state lawmakers, University of Arizona professors and

local activists to meet and talk with people about the current state of indigenous people across the globe.

“There’s a lot of misinformation about indigenous communities,” said Jose Matus, Director of the Indigenous Alliance without Borders. “There are issues that we still need to work on, whether it be housing, education or social justice issues.”

Sunday also marked the 18th anniversary for Matus’ organization. He said, nearly two decades since its founding, the Indigenous Alliance still has plenty left to accomplish in southern Arizona

“(We) help people by letting them know they’re not alone here and these are your rights that you have as an individual, indigenous person.”

Sunday’s holiday is recognized by the United Nations, but not the United States. Matus said state and federal lawmakers have to understand the needs of indigenous people if they are ever going to be truly accepted.

“They have recognized the need for it but they have not adopted what we call the DRIP, Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People.”

Proceeds from Sunday’s event will be used for the effort to rename Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day.

Direct Link: <http://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/story/29746419/worlds-indigenous-peoples-day-recognized-in-tucson>

200 Attend First All-Nations Basketball Camp

[Tanya H. Lee](#)

8/10/15

Two hundred American Indian high school kids from five states and more than 20 tribes turned up at the Pentagon July 20—to play basketball.

The one-day basketball and life skills All-Nations Camp was organized by Sanford POWER Basketball Academy’s Basketball Coordinator Allan Bertram, who, along with other coaches of Native kids in the region, wanted to offer athletes entering grades 8 to 12 an experience they would never forget.

Bertram, who started out as a coach on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation 17 years ago, said the camp was the first of its kind in the nation. He says, “The biggest thing I took away

from Rosebud was that basketball was the heartbeat of that community. The kids lived and breathed it; the community supported it 125 percent.”



Chris Eagle Bear, Todd County High School, takes a shot. (Photo courtesy of Sanford Health)

The coaches thought they could use basketball to “provide the kids with a great experience that would not be just basketball related but also something where we could throw in some of the life skills and lifelong lessons that are often taught through athletics.” It could be the vehicle for talking to kids about some of the issues they face every day, such as diabetes and teen suicide.

Sanford Health proved to be just the partner the project needed. “Sanford Health put together presentations on proper diet and nutrition and brought in a college coach to speak to the kids about goal setting and how if they believe in something and they work hard towards it, then anything is possible,” says Bertram.



Koby O'Rourke, Red Cloud High School, practices dribbling. (Photo courtesy of Sanford Health)

“They did a phenomenal job in bringing over people who came to talk to the kids about hydration and nutrition and put together handouts for the kids to take home with them,” says Bertram.

Under Armour sponsored the camp and supplied the T-shirts for all the participants. The kids’ coaches supplied the transportation from reservation and non-reservation schools as far away as North Dakota, Minnesota, Nevada and Wyoming, as well as South Dakota.

Sanford’s Pentagon is a 160,000-square-foot sports complex opened in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 2013. It is a premier facility with nine basketball courts, including NBA/college size court, home of the Sioux Falls Skyforce, Miami Heat’s D-League team.



The 160,000-square-foot Sanford Pentagon is a state-of-the-art sports complex. (Photo courtesy of Sanford Health)

Lyle LeBeau, Jr., girls’ basketball coach at Little Wound High School on the Pine Ridge Reservation in North Dakota, says this opportunity to play ball at the Pentagon was like a dream for many of the kids. The vast majority of them had never been to the Pentagon and it was an opportunity for them to be part of something they’d only heard about.

Bertram says he and the other coaches want the All-Native Basketball Camp to become an annual event, eventually drawing kids from all over the country. For more information on how to participate, contact Bertram at 605-312-7920 or allan.bertram@sanfordhealth.org.



The Heritage Court, one of nine basketball/volleyball courts, is the centerpiece of the Pentagon. (Photo courtesy of Sanford Health)



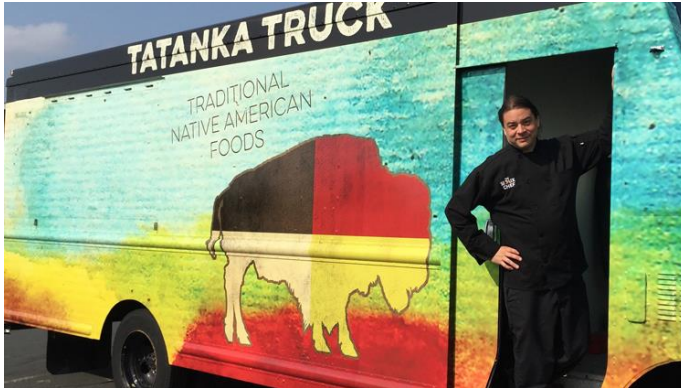
Coach Allan Bertram blocks Aiden Bizardi, of Todd County High School. (Photo courtesy of Sanford Health)

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/10/200-attend-first-all-nations-basketball-camp-161276>

Tatanka Truck Brings Native American Cuisine To The Streets of Minnesota

Chef Sean Sherman introduces Minnesota's first indigenous food truck.

by [Erica Rivera](#) Aug 10th, 2015



When it comes to Native American cuisine, chef Sean Sherman wants you to think beyond fry bread. As the culinary craftsman for [Tatanka Truck](#), Minnesota's first indigenous food truck, Sherman is taking Dakota, Lakota, and Ojibwe-influenced eats, with a fresh spin, to the streets.

Born and raised on Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, Sherman started cooking around age 13 in steakhouses and tourist restaurants in the Black Hills. After graduating from Black Hills State University, he moved to Minneapolis, became a chef, and immersed himself in the organic food scene. A member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, Sherman wanted to write a cookbook that featured the flavors and tastes from Lakota culture, but in a modern context. He spent three years researching, during which time his authorial endeavor morphed into an idea for a restaurant called [The Sioux Chef](#). Sherman started catering under that brand name in 2014, which led to opportunities for education, outreach, and speaking engagements about the health benefits of a Native American diet.



Chef Sean Sherman. Photo by Heidi Ehalt.

At one of those talks, Sherman was approached by members of Little Earth, a housing community for Native Americans in Minneapolis. They had recently purchased a food

truck and asked Sherman to work in partnership with them on the concept, design, and the menu for the truck. Sherman won't be serving the "oppression food."

Fry bread was born out of necessity when the government supplied little more than flour, sugar, salt, and lard as staples to the Navajo forced to relocate from Arizona to New Mexico in 1864. "It eventually became like a survival food when people were removed from their traditional food systems," Sherman says. "It's been absorbed by all the Native communities. I grew up with it, and it's tasty, but it's everything that's unhealthy for you all wrapped into one."

Instead of fry bread, Sherman makes indigenous tacos: a grilled corn and bean cake that's seared, then topped with bison, smoked turkey, grilled walleye, or roasted squash with maple. Manoomin (wild rice) salad, grilled corn, and cedar tea are other items on the summer menu.



Maple-glazed squash with seed mix.

What you won't find on the truck are any processed sugars, wheat flour, dairy, beef, pork, or chicken; Sherman's sticking to a "pre-contact" palate, or what Native people were eating before Europeans settled in the Upper Midwest in the late-1800s.

Relying heavily on corn, rice, beans, and squash, as well as flavors like cedar and maple, and herbs such as balsam fir and rose hips, Sherman sources organic ingredients as often as possible from local ranchers, farmers, and reservations. He says he wants to keep the food clean and traditional, but fun and interesting as well. Simplicity is also paramount, given the quick and mobile nature of a food truck, which quietly opened at the end of July.

Sherman hopes that Tatanka Truck will not only satisfy appetites but also highlight the benefits and the beauty of indigenous diets. "We're using this food truck as a job creation tool," says Sherman, "so we can hire people from the community and inspire more people to do more traditional Native American foods."

Read more at <http://www.craveonline.com/culture/888125-tatanka-truck-brings-native-american-cuisine-streets-minnesota#v7R3hzdD4LDpdKbb.99>

Event raises awareness of obesity in Native American community

August 11, 2015 by [Madeline Kennedy](#) [Leave a Comment](#)

Milwaukee's Native American community gathered recently at Kosciusko Park on the city's South Side to raise awareness about childhood obesity, a large issue for the community, according to experts at the [Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center](#).

Hosted by the health center, the third annual Fight Childhood Obesity event offered children the opportunity to get active through free workouts such as boxing, yoga and Zumba. Attendees also could receive free physicals, a new feature this year.

Stacey Mattson, a support specialist at the center, noted that while obesity is a problem in many ethnic groups across the country, it remains especially prevalent among the country's Native Americans.



Elizabeth Sedgwick, a nurse practitioner at the Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center, performs a physical examination. (Photo by Madeline Kennedy)

“The rate is specifically so high because of the traditional food they were used to eating before it was Americanized,” Mattson explained. “They didn’t have all these processed foods and were used to eating very natural, so it’s something their bodies have a hard time processing. It’s led to skyrocketing rates of obesity.”

Native Americans have struggled with obesity for generations, but according to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), it has increased dramatically during the last 30 years.

While there are many contributing factors, the most dominant are the shifts in diet and lifestyle. Diets historically high in complex carbohydrates and lower in fat have been replaced by foods high in sodium, sugar and saturated fat.

High rates of poverty and unemployment also limit access to healthy foods and promote reliance on federal commodity programs for Indian tribes. Another [HHS study](#) found that fat intake was more than 30 percent above the recommended amount in Native American communities across the country.

The Ignace Health Center has hosted the Fight Childhood Obesity event for three summers. This year, Mattson and other event organizers teamed up with Health Center physicians to provide free physicals for kids in the community.

“Not everyone in the community has the opportunity to receive annual or even frequent physicals,” Mattson said. “That’s why we felt it was important to offer physicals.”

Nurse Practitioner Elizabeth Sedgwick was one of several volunteers administering exams. Sedgwick has been with Ignace for less than a year, but has worked with the Native American community throughout her medical career. Prior to beginning at Ignace, Sedgwick spent two years working on a remote reservation in Montana.

“It seems to me, after being on a reservation, that [the Native American community] is a close group,” Sedgwick said. “There’s a lot of cultural pride.... It’s something that should be appreciated and celebrated.”

Sedgwick added that she sees a lot of overweight children in her line of work and believes it’s important to take time to discuss obesity with kids and their parents.

“To me, it’s very important that I teach kids and parents healthy lifestyles,” she said. “If there’s a kid in my office and I don’t have an appointment after them, I’ll keep them there and talk about obesity until the parent says, ‘We really have to go.’ It’s something that needs to be discussed.”

At one point Sedgwick and other community members halted the activities for a discussion about the importance of exercise and health. Children stopped and listened before returning to their workouts.

Mattson was pleased with the event. “Seeing all the kids come together as a community to have fun and be active instead of staying indoors and playing video games is great.”

Direct Link: <http://milwaukeeenns.org/2015/08/11/event-raises-awareness-of-obesity-in-native-american-community/?ref=onmilwaukee>

Finding An Inner Light While Dancing Native Traditions

[Erin Tapahe](#)

8/11/15

I knew I was signing up for an adventure when I tried out for Living Legends, a spectacular dance group at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah that performs all over the world.

What I didn't know was that even as I was traveling out into the world of bright stage lights and faraway places like Canada and Alaska, I would be taking an even greater journey to find my light to become the best I can be.

Living Legends is unique because it incorporates three diverse cultures—Native American, Latin American and Polynesian—into a tribute to the ancient cultures of the Americas and the Pacific Islands. With vibrant colors, ancestral stories, and a mission of sharing these three cultures, the group travels throughout the United States and the world.

Even before I became a member of the troupe, Living Legends was a window into claiming my own heritage. When I was younger, I moved away from the reservation and attended a school where the majority of students were white. I became one of three Native Americans in my graduating class. During school, I was timid and shy when it came to my Native background because students asked me questions like, “Can I come to your house? I’ve never seen a teepee,” or raised their hands to their mouths to make a repetitive noise and ask, “What does that mean in Indian?” From those types of questions, I became distant and ashamed of my Native American culture.

When I was in the eighth grade, I saw Living Legends for the first time. I admired the love the dancers had for their culture and heritage, which made me proud to be Native. At the end of the performance there was a girl who came up and said, “Ya’ ateeh,” (hello, in Navajo) then continued talking to me. From that moment, I knew that I could be like her. I could be a person who proudly spoke my Native tongue without fear, or wear my Native regalia without being ashamed of feeling different.

A week before fall semester at BYU, Living Legends held auditions. The audition process included three separate tests. The first was a solo where I performed the hoop dance. The second required me to learn dances from all three cultures: Polynesia, Latin America, and Native America, then demonstrate each dance for the judges. The final level was a personal interview with the selection committee.

Auditions for Living Legends are competitive and making the team as a freshman is rare. Usually, the dance troupe is filled with students who were in the group the previous year,

or mature upperclassmen with experience in balancing school, dancing, and other responsibilities. But I made it! I became one of 12 people to make the Native American section, and one of just four freshmen to join the team.

In the middle of last semester, Living Legends traveled to New Mexico and Texas for 10 days. This meant I was expected to submit all midterm projects and homework before I left. During this tour, I became sick and spent my free time studying for a midterm I had to take during this tour. I also had to study for midterms I would take when I returned to school. I believe it was the stress of studying, little sleep, and touring that made me sick. However, all my worries escaped once I touched the stage and performed.

At the last performance on that tour, I was able to visit Gallup, New Mexico, which is near my hometown of Window Rock, Arizona, and dance for my family. I danced for my younger cousins, and from the look in their eyes, I knew that I had become a role model to them.

Right before the Bow and Arrow number, a Navajo-inspired dance, I felt my heart quicken from nervousness. I double-checked my attire, tying the belt the way my grandmother taught me, and prayed quietly that I might represent my people in the best way that I could. After finishing my solo, I heard the loudest applause from the audience.

I had an even longer road show in April. Living Legends took its summer tour, which was for four weeks throughout British Columbia and Alaska. We visited a small island, Metlakatla, Alaska, that is a self-governing reservation of 1,500 people, including 250 children.

The show in Metlakatla was different than most because all the lights in the gym were on, which allowed me to see the audience's faces. This show wasn't only for the school—the entire community was invited to attend. Near the end of the performance, I got to hoop dance as part of the finale. Afterward, a little kid came up to me and said, “I used to hoop dance, too.”



A young Alaska Native boy felt encouraged to take up dancing again after seeing hoop dancers of the Brigham Young University's Living Legends company perform on his homeland. Erin Tapahe, Navajo, is on the right. (Courtesy Mark Philbrick)

“Why don’t you still hoop dance?” I asked him. The boy looked at his feet, saying, “Because I didn’t think it was cool.” Then he quickly looked up, realizing how that might sound, and said “But you’re cool. You can do all that cool stuff. I can’t.”

I assured the boy that one day he could become better than me if he worked hard. And I realized I had come full circle since the first time I saw Living Legends. I was a role model, too.

Later that night, I started a fire with my friends, but eventually left. When I noticed the sky changing colors, I saw it was filled with shades of green, yellow, purple and pink. It was the Northern Lights. It was unusual to see the *aurora borealis* because the sky usually wasn’t dark enough or cold enough at that time of year. I quickly pulled out my camera, trying to capture a picture to share with my family. Tears streamed down my face because I couldn’t capture that moment with the camera. I desperately wanted to share this moment with them, but later understood that this was a blessing for me.

Student journalist Erin Tapahe, Navajo, is a 2015-2016 Native American Journalist Fellow and a sophomore at Brigham Young University. She wrote this story for the Native American Journalists Association’s newsroom immersion program at the National Native Media Conference in Washington, D.C.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/11/finding-inner-light-while-dancing-native-traditions-161219>

EMU to drop Huron logo from marching band uniforms

By Katrease Stafford, Detroit Free Press 4:19 p.m. EDT August 11, 2015



Eastern Michigan University announced today it will be dropping the Huron logo from marching band uniforms after controversy swirled in June when members of the Native American community voiced objections at a board meeting.

EMU Interim President Kim Schatzel made the announcement in an email to the campus community.

Several members of the community spoke out during the meeting, renewing controversy over the school's use of the Huron logo, which depicted an Indian with a painted face and two feathers.

"This morning I notified members of the Native American Student Organization and their faculty advisor, Dr. Lori Burlingame, that I am initiating a process to remove the Huron logo from the jackets of the EMU Marching Band," Schatzel said. "The university will be purchasing new uniform jackets with no logos nor symbols other than the block 'E,' which will continue to be on the outside of the jacket. "

Schatzel said the action will happen "as expeditiously as possible" and the associated costs will be paid for out of donated funds from the EMU Foundation.

Schatzel said there will be no impact on the General Fund and no tuition dollars will be utilized.

"This action results from a thorough review, by myself and members of EMU's senior leadership team, of the 1991 decision by the Board of Regents to stop using the Huron logo and name," she said in an email. "... As we all know, controversy and questions surrounding the use of logos and symbols that are offensive to some groups or community members is a highly complex issue that is not isolated to Eastern Michigan University.'

The use of the logo has long been controversial at the university. The school was known as the Hurons for 62 years but In 1991, under pressure from the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and Native Americans, EMU was one of the first schools in the nation to drop its logo and change from the Hurons to the Eagles.

But three years ago, former university president Susan Martin reintroduced the Huron logo under a flap on the marching band uniforms, along with another logo representing when the band was formed in 1894.

Amber Morseau, President of the Native American Student Organization at EMU, said she was pleased with the announcement, which followed a morning meeting with Schatzel. Morseau said she believes EMU is again on the "right side of history."

"It is our hope that with this decision, and the reiteration of the damaging effects of racist images, stereotypes, and symbols in our lives and our communities, the environment at EMU will improve not only for Native students, but for all students of color moving

forward," Morseau said. "... We are not costumes, we are not mascots, and we appreciate that Dr. Schatzel was able to understand this so easily and was committed to doing the right thing."

Direct Link: <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/08/11/emu-hurons-logo/31461549/>

Four Ways Mexico's Indigenous Farmers Are Practicing the Agriculture of the Future

How can we get the most out of our farmland without harming the planet? I traveled to rural Mexico to learn from indigenous farmers.



Local maize varieties harvested from the farm of Josefino Martinez. Photo by Jonah Vitale-Wolff.

[Leah Penniman](#) posted Aug 10, 2015

Affectionately called “Professor” by his neighbors, Josefino Martinez is a well-respected indigenous farmer and community organizer from the remote town of Chicahuaxtla, in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. He watched with patient attention as I showed him photographs of Soul Fire Farm, my family’s organic farm in the mountains of upstate New York.

Western agronomists would have us believe that Triqui farming practices are irrelevant today.

I tried to convince Martinez that our farms had a lot in common. “Like you, we have marginal mountain soils and steep slopes, and we’ve worked for years to build up the fertility,” I explained.

Martinez finished his simple breakfast of fresh corn tortillas with black beans. Then he rose, donned his baseball cap and undersized school backpack, and took me out to see the land he cultivates. I quickly came to understand that my idea of “marginal soils” and

“steep slopes” were naive, if not laughable. It was the height of the dry season and Martinez’s land was hard, brittle, and gray. The farm was literally etched into the mountainside, with a slope so severe that plowing with tractors or animals was impossible. Yet his storage room was full of maize, beans, dried chili, squash seeds, and fresh fruit that he’d grown right here.

When I asked how this was possible, Martinez explained that he simply farmed in the manner of his ancestors, the indigenous Triqui people.



Josefino Martinez explains how the pine trees he planted just three years ago are stabilizing the soil on the mountainside. Photo by Leah Penniman.

Western agronomists would have us believe that Triqui farming practices are irrelevant today, but I thought they might be part of the solution to the nascent global food crisis. I spent the first half of 2015 in southern Mexico on a Fulbright fellowship to exchange ideas with indigenous farmers like Martinez on how get long-term high yields out of difficult farmland. I was fed up with our society’s obsession with corporate, industrial agriculture, which is flooding vulnerable communities with unhealthy food, destroying natural resources, and undermining the independent family farm.

What I learned gave me hope.

According to a [detailed report](#) by my favorite think tank, the World Resources Institute, the first thing to know about the impending food crisis is that the human population is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050. That’s a 37 percent increase from 2012, when it reached 7 billion. Even imagining massive redistribution of food resources, the world will need to produce 69 percent more calories by 2050 to feed all those people.

But agriculture already accounts for a nearly a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions and 70 percent of freshwater use globally. So if we simply increased the scale of what we’re doing now, the ecological effects would be catastrophic. The report goes on to describe a “menu of solutions” that farmers can follow in the future to grow more food without using additional land, water, and fuel.

I had a hunch that rural farmers in Mexico were already modeling some of these practices and not being credited. While it was difficult to leave behind the daily responsibilities of tending the land, I knew that only grassroots farmer-to-farmer exchange could solve the

world's food crisis. So, with my husband and children at my side, I left behind our farm in New York and traversed the windy mountain roads of Oaxaca to trade ideas on how to feed our communities with dignity and take care of the earth at the same time.

What I learned gave me hope. Here are three items from WRI's list of solutions that the farmers I met are already doing—and one that isn't on their list but probably should be.

1. Farm like a forest

Not accounting for land covered by water, desert, or ice, about half of the planet is dedicated to pasture and croplands, according to WRI's study. And the continued expansion of agricultural land is driving biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, an increase in "cropping intensity" could avert the need to clear an additional 62 million hectares for crops by 2050. That's an area about the size of France. In other words, farmers need to start growing different plants one after another on the same land, as well as growing them closer together at the same time, a practice known as intercropping.

Planting different crops together minimizes soil erosion.

Oswaldo Flores, a Zapotec indigenous man from the village of Yaviche, explained how his community uses intercropping and agroforestry to grow more food without expanding into new lands.

"The forest pulls clouds from the sky so that they drop rain on the fields below," Flores said, while showing me his shade-grown coffee farm.

The farm is a *cafetal*, a shady, multistory system with tall, purple-podded *guajinicuiles* and fruit trees forming the upper layer, coffee trees at the intermediate layer, and smaller food plants and vines (chiles, chives, chayotes) near the ground. The trees protect the plants below from high winds and cold temperatures, and their fallen leaves provide a natural compost that inhibits weed growth, adds fertility, and retains soil humidity. *Guajinicuiles* also fix nitrogen, making it available in organic form in the soil. This system of shade-grown coffee is almost equal to the native forest in terms of biodiversity, and maintains habitat for migratory birds.

At the edge of Flores' *cafetal*, the vegetation transitioned to another complex and even more ancient intercropping system. The *milpa* is a Mesoamerican technology that integrates maize, beans, squash and other complementary food crops. While estimates of its age differ, it is at least 3,000 years old. The intercropped *milpa* system is multilayered, with maize in the upper canopy, beans in the intermediate story, and squash at the bottom. Bean plants fix atmospheric nitrogen and help reduce damage caused by the corn earworm pest (*Helicoverpa* *sea*). Squash plants inhibit weed growth with their dense network of thick, broad leaves and retain soil humidity. Natural chemicals (*cucurbitacins*) washed from the leaf surface act as a mild herbicide and pesticide.



Corn, beans, and squash grow together in this *milpa*, tended by Oswaldo Flores. Photo by Leah Penniman.

Planting different crops together minimizes soil erosion because their roots form a dense network that holds soil in place. This system also tends to be very efficient, squeezing the maximum value out of every drop of water, ray of sunlight, and bit of nutrients in the soil. According to studies using the Land Equivalency Ratio—a way of measuring the productivity of agricultural land—intercropped fields often yield 40 to 50 percent more than monocropped ones.

H. Garrison Wilkes, professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, calls *milpa* “one of the most successful human inventions ever created.”

2. Eat low on the food chain

Aside from the detrimental health effects of getting our protein from animal products, it's also highly inefficient. Poultry is the most efficient conventional source of meat, and still only converts 11 percent of its feed energy into human food. Beef cows convert only 1 percent and are major contributors of greenhouse gases. Shifting toward plant and insect-based protein sources is part of the sustainable food solution.

Amaranth is making a comeback in Brisa's town.

“You have never tried *chicatanas*?” challenged Brisa Ochoa, as she served our family a salsa made of mashed ants in her hometown of Ayoquezco. During the first spring rains, the *chicatana* ant leaves its nest, only to be captured by eager residents who prize its sweet and tangy flavor. Mexico has 300 to 550 species of edible insects, more than any other country in the world, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. Among the most popular in Oaxaca are grasshoppers known as *chapulines*, served roasted and flavored with lime and chili, and maguey worms, served ground up and incorporated into a spicy salt. Insect protein takes some getting used to, but it's healthier and more environmentally sustainable than livestock, boasting a feed conversion ratio of more than 50 percent.

While insect protein is important in rural Mexico, it mainly serves as flavoring for plant-based protein sources. Brisa served her salsa with beans on a fresh, warm corn tortilla resulting from an ancient process called nixtamalization. She used limestone and hot

water to remove the hull from the maize, then ground up the kernels into the dough for tortillas.

Nixtamalization makes the protein in maize more bioavailable to the human body and increases its niacin content. When combined with beans, the nixtamalized corn offers a complete protein.



Gustavo, a farmer from Yagavila, Oaxaca, poses with his organic sugar cane. Photo by Leah Penniman.

Brisa's family also grows amaranth, a native Mesoamerican grain that has been cultivated in Mexico for at least 6,000 years. Nearly eradicated by the conquering Spaniards who feared its role in traditional religion, amaranth is making a comeback in Brisa's town, thanks to her family's breeding and sharing its seeds. Up until this trip to Mexico, I had only experienced amaranth as a "weed" invading my neat beds of vegetables and didn't realize that its seeds are 13 to 15 percent protein, among the highest for any grain. Amaranth is also high in fiber, calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorus, zinc, folate, and vitamins A and C. Like beans, amaranth can be combined with maize to form a complete protein.

Brisa's family does eat chicken, beef, and pork, but usually only on special occasions. Plant and insect protein are the basis of their healthful, affordable, and sustainable diet.

3. Restore health to damaged land

Cropland can expand at low environmental cost if the encroached lands do not have much natural potential to store carbon or support biodiversity. The arid Mixteca region of Oaxaca meets these criteria and has been termed an "ecological disaster zone" by the World Bank. Soil erosion and depletion has damaged about one million acres of cropland, and corn productivity rates have plummeted to the lowest in Mexico.

León Santos says he has seen yields increase fourfold.

Jesús León Santos, sustainable agriculture coordinator at CEDICAM, an indigenous farming organization in the Mixteca, blames Green Revolution farming technology for the environmental destruction. The Green Revolution of the 1960s was an U.S.-led international effort to push adoption of farm mechanization, hybrid seeds, and chemical fertilizers in order to increase yields.

León Santos is working to revive and enhance indigenous farming wisdom in order to restore the health of the soil and the productivity of the land.



This degraded land in the Mixteca was restored to lush vegetable gardens under the direction of Jesús León Santos. Photo by Leah Penniman.

The first step for León Santos and his farming community was to build trenches, stone walls, and terraces to stop the erosion of the remaining soils and to slow water runoff so aquifers can recharge. He stabilized these barriers with tenacious local vegetation, such as the sweet-smelling vetiver grass, which withstands drought, flooding, and mudslides.

Once stabilized, the barren hillsides were reforested with native tree species, like nitrogen-fixing alders (*Alnus acumilata*) and pines (*Pinus oaxacana*). The CEDICAM community saves its own native crop seed, using an in-the-field selection process that has persisted regionally since the pre-Columbian era. They preserve and exchange the best seeds of maize, beans, squash, chile, tomatillo, chayote, squash, sunflower, and prickly pear, as well as local specialties like cempoalxochitl, quintoniles, and huauzontle.

The farmers further improve the soil by planting and tilling in “cover crops,” which add nutrients and organic matter. Some native varieties are especially good for this, like the “frijol nescafe,” (*Mucuna deeringiana*) a nitrogen-fixing bean that thrives in dry soil. Finally, farmers add compost and plant debris so that the land is finally ready to receive these carefully maintained crop seeds.

The use of erosion control barriers, intercropping, and seed saving are part of the knowledge León Santos inherited from his Zapotec ancestors. And it’s working. León Santos says he has seen yields increase fourfold after incorporating these ancient and modern sustainable growing techniques. The newly established vegetation sequesters atmospheric carbon and attracts biodiversity.

The art of transforming lands of low ecological productivity into thriving foodscapes is not unique to the Mixteca. León Santos reminded me that the Aztec Empire sustained itself on *chinampas*, intricate gardens built of vegetation and river muck, essentially artificial islands constructed in shallow lakes. *Chinampas* are widely considered the most productive form of agriculture ever invented, and are so fertile that they can yield four to seven harvests per year. Indigenous Mexicans have long-standing successes in positive ecological transformation.

4. Cultivate reverence for the planet

One essential element missing from the World Resource Institute's otherwise thorough and brilliant "menu of solutions" for the global food crisis was the ethical perspective that co-evolved with best practices in environmental management. This ethic, known as *convivencia*, or "living together" with both our human and natural communities, is best summarized by Kiado Cruz, a Zapotec farmer from the Oaxacan town of Yagavila:

The ground beneath our feet is our Mother Nature, who has carried us and sustains us. As we work her, we do not profane her, rather we carry out our task as farmers in the context of the sacred. It is corn through which Mother Nature nourishes us. It is flesh of our flesh, because we are people of corn. So we have to collect it in a manner that shows the respect we owe both our soil and our brother corn.

It is with a similar sense of belonging and reverence that I placed corn seeds into our home soil upon return, establishing Soul Fire Farm's first *milpa*, an ancient and intricate tangle of complementary sister crops bringing us one small step closer to a sustainable food future.



A boy snuggles into his grandmother, who wears the traditional woven *huipil* of the Triqui indigenous people. Photo by Jonah Vitale-Wolff.

Leah Penniman wrote this article for [YES! Magazine](http://www.yesmagazine.org), a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. Leah is a farmer and educator based in the Albany, N.Y., area.

Direct Link: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/four-ways-mexico-indigenous-farmers-agriculture-of-the-future-20150810>

See Marilyn Manson Play Native American Hit Man in Movie Trailer

"I was asked to burn down a house and 'kill' a bunch of people, so the answer was 'yes' obviously," Manson says of crime film 'Let Me Make You a Martyr'

By [Kory Grow](#) August 12, 2015

Let Me Make You a Martyr, the upcoming, harrowing new crime movie about an abusive father, is set to reunite *Sons of Anarchy*'s Mark Boone Junior with shock rocker and erstwhile *Sons* actor [Marilyn Manson](#). While the film won't arrive until next year, check out an exclusive trailer featuring Manson as a Native American hit man.

Boone plays Larry Glass, a character whom the movie's producers describe as "a drug dealer, pimp and all-around scumbag," who hires Manson's character Pope, a hit man (or "bogeyman," as Manson describes it), to find and kill the grown-up adopted son rebelling against him.

As the cryptic trailer shows, much of the drama revolves around the son (Niko Nicotera) and the adopted sister (Sam Quartin) he's fallen in love with and how they're trying to break free from Boone's character's clutches. Nicotera and Quartin's characters meet in a diner as Manson looks at them ominously. Meanwhile, Nicotera tells a story about finding peace in chaos juxtaposed with shots of Manson covered in blood and Boone driving.

For Manson, it was a welcome reunion with Boone. "Mark brought me into the project," Manson says. "We were friends from *Sons of Anarchy*. He's sort of my unwanted mentor. He tells me what to do. He's always encouraged me, but he's very bossy about it. He says things like, 'You gotta do this, motherfucker. You'll like this.'"

"He's no spring chicken," Boone says lovingly and carefully of why he prods Manson into acting. "Who wants to be a rock & roll star his entire life? I thought he was the perfect choice for this."

Boone came into the project via co-writer and co-director John Swab, who based the story partly on his own life. "It felt very authentic," Boone says. The film had grown out of a half-hour short that Swab made with *Martyr* partner Corey Asraf, titled *Judas' Chariot*, which starred Quartin, but Boone took on the feature-length movie without seeing its predecessor because, as he puts it, "I trusted my feelings about John."

In addition to *Sons*, the actor had been working with Manson on a TV show he's been trying to launch called *Dave and Shim*, for which there are already a number of [YouTube shorts](#). "[Manson's] just a monster intellect and a fascinating guy and [*Dave and Shim*]

offered him the chance to sink his teeth into an acting role, which, at the time, he'd never had before," Boone says. "He's so hilariously fantastic and such a quick-witted human."

"I just had to observe the level of poverty and white trash element to the story," says Manson. "Just seeing that, I knew where to go"

With *Let Me Make You a Martyr*, Boone's gut instincts about Manson were spot-on, as the rocker loved the role.

"Within the first day, I was asked if I wanted to skin a coyote," the singer says excitedly. "It was already dead. And I was asked to burn down a house and 'kill' a bunch of people, so the answer was 'yes' obviously."

Beyond the shocking hijinks, Manson says he was able to fall into character easily upon arriving in Tulsa for the shoot. "I just had to observe the level of poverty and, I guess, white trash element to the story," he says. "The house where my character lives, sort of on a swamp on a reservation, looked like a combination between *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *Apocalypse Now*. It was pretty epic. Just seeing that, I knew where to go."

Aside from taking delight in horrific surroundings, Manson also identified with another trait of his character: "I am part Indian," he says. The singer adds that he did not know Pope was Native American when he took the role because the script didn't specify it.

"I really didn't have to change too much about myself physically," he says. "I already had just shaved my hair to a Mohawk and it's black already, so without being stereotypical, that seems like the character would have that if he was part Indian. I think originally they had envisioned someone with long black hair."

Manson's heritage is Sioux on his mother's side – "her family was from the Appalachian Mountains, West Virginia" – but other than taking part in a Native American–run program akin to Boy Scouts, that side of his family was not heavy on his upbringing. "They gave me one of those wooden, carved tom-tom drums and it was bound with animal hide and it was painted," he says of his sole memory of the experience. "I just remember I ended up stealing the drum and never going back." He laughs.

Boone took the role, he says, simply because he likes playing a bad guy. "Somebody's gotta do it," he says, joking. "He's just another guy out there trying to make a living, I guess, but what makes people unhappy, I think, is a mystery. I think unhappy people often do very cruel things.... I'm kind of like that so...I'm unhappy and I do cool things a lot." He laughs.

"I often think about what evil is," he adds. "I don't know if there are people who do evil things on purpose. I guess a lot of people have their reasons for doing what they do and their justification. But people get stuck in corners that they can't get out of and react like caged animals. People often feel they have had unjust things done to them and they feel justified in reacting in horrible ways. I think that's what provokes this guy. He thinks that

his adopted son has violated him horribly. So he tries to fix it by doing more horrible things."



Marilyn Manson, on the set of 'Let Me Make You a Martyr.'

Boone, whose extensive résumé includes movies like *Memento* and *Batman Begins* as well as TV shows like *Seinfeld* and *The Wonder Years*, says this production stood out to him as something special. "It was a really great working environment," he says. "I'm very hopeful about the prospects of this project. It's a really interesting story and a lot of good people are involved."

Manson, too, is excited about *Let Me Make You a Martyr*. "It was the biggest role that I've played," he says. "On the script, I'd say I was on half of the pages. I don't know how the movie will end up though."

The singer says he's also energized about another acting project he has in the works, specifically, an idea that was born out of his current tour with Smashing Pumpkins. "Billy [Corgan] has plans on directing and we have a project that we were thinking about doing," Manson says. "It's based on a book that I read when I was making *Mechanical Animals*, that he had given to me. It might be a pretty grand project, so it might not happen for a little while but it's a script that he's had for a long time. I have to keep it a secret, but it's a great role."

Read more: <http://www.rollingstone.com/movies/news/see-marilyn-manson-play-native-american-hit-man-in-movie-trailer-20150812#ixzz3ii9Svq6b>

Mapuche indigenous culture thrives in Chile and abroad

By *LUIS ANDRES HENAO* August 12, 2015 12:15 AM



SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Nestled between high-rise buildings on a busy street in Chile's modern capital is a straw hut that's a sign of growing respect for the Andean country's long-disdained indigenous past.

Ailing patients, many referred by a hospital across the street, line up to see the Mapuche herbalist inside as part of a government initiative to incorporate pre-Hispanic knowledge into Chile's public health system.

Mapuche culture, long looked down upon in Chile, is slowly becoming chic.

"I'm not Mapuche but I believe in their culture," said Elba Soto, 56, who often comes to the ruka — a traditional Mapuche thatched home — looking for herbs and ointments to ease the pain in her bones. "And I love all of it."

The geometrical designs of the Mapuche have made their way into fashion shows from New York to Paris, their food is inspiring high-end cuisine and popular singer Ana Tijoux waves the multicolored Mapuche flag during her concerts and raps about their struggle in her Grammy-nominated albums. Television stations even compete for ratings with shows about the country's largest indigenous group.

"The Mapuche today are not just folklore. The Mapuche today are a cultural icon and a pop-cultural icon," said Pedro Cayuqueo, a Mapuche author and host of "KulMapu," a popular TV show profiling everything Mapuche that is broadcast on CNN Chile. "It makes people in rock, film and gastronomy become interested and stop looking at the Mapuche in a paternalistic way, but as something that's cool."

The Mapuche, a name that means "people of the land" in their original language, resisted invaders for centuries — first the mighty Incan empire, then the Spanish conquistadors who arrived five centuries ago in the area now known as Chile.

The Mapuche ultimately won treaties with the Chilean state recognizing their right to everything south of the Bio Bio river, or roughly the entire southern half of the long, thin country.

But in the late 19th century, a new wave of European settlers arrived, and the treaties were broken, with Mapuche lands seized in violent takeovers. The survivors were pushed to the fringes of settled lands.

Today, most of the more than 1 million Mapuche live in Santiago's metropolitan area and in their ancestral home in south-central Araucania, the country's poorest region.

As group, they are far poorer and less educated than other Chileans, more prone to suffer illness, malnutrition and discrimination.

Even with the return of some lands in recent decades, the Mapuche hold a small fraction of what they controlled until the late 19th century.

A radical faction of the Mapuche in Araucania has occupied and burned farms and lumber trucks to demand the return of lands. Police have been accused of violent abuses, including storming into Mapuche homes during raids and shooting rubber bullets indiscriminately at women and children.

While most Chileans, and most Mapuche, reject the violence, the conflict has drawn attention to indigenous demands and interest in their culture.

Cayuqueo said young Mapuche are curious about exploring their roots and no longer deny their origins the way their ancestors did to avoid discrimination.

Authorities in Chile also are taking some steps to encourage the culture of native peoples. Last month, the government hosted the first tournament of indigenous soccer players from all over Latin America. This month, it launched a pilot program to train professors to teach the original Mapuche tongue, Mapudungun, which is still spoken by many.

At the hut in Santiago, herbalist Natalia Ojeda Hueitra said she sees improvement in how Mapuches are treated.

"Before there was a lot of discrimination, lots of people looking down at us and many saw the Mapuche as the lowest of the low," said Hueitra, who wears the traditional "trapelacucha," a large silver collar that spreads to the chest. "Not anymore. Today, it's about empowerment."

You'll find Mapuche influence on the menu at Borago restaurant, recently named in the prestigious San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list. It employs traditional cooking methods, such cooking in the ground with live embers, and uses ingredients such as maqui, a berry that comes from a tree that is sacred to the indigenous group.

"We're cooking the native cuisine of Chile," said Rodolfo Guzman, Borago's chef and owner. "We're the continuation of the Mapuche."

VOZ, a New York fashion design company, works with Mapuche artisans in Chile and sells their hand-woven designs as far away as Asia and the Middle East. They've been displayed in Los Angeles and Paris and during New York Fashion Week.

The Mapuche work "is so beautiful and so expertly crafted," said VOZ founder Jasmine Aarons. "And the stories that the Mapuche artisans tell in their artwork is so powerful, like their culture."

Chilean state television recently began broadcasting a historical drama called "Besieged: The Other Side of the Conquest," which focuses on the battle of Curalaba in 1598, a famous victory by the Mapuche against Spanish colonizers. The show has been so popular that some local critics refer to it as the Mapuche "Game of Thrones."

"What's happening shows that Mapuche people have a lot of wisdom to share," said Mapuche leader Hugo Alcaman. "We're proud of being indigenous because we know of the wisdom that we have to offer to the world."

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/mapuche-indigenous-culture-thrives-chile-abroad-040525067.html>

Indigenous or American, we need to protect black bodies everywhere



[Stan Grant](#)

Australians fixated on the struggle in Ferguson should remember that Indigenous people suffer violence the same way, often with worse results



'The need to defend our very bodies is as urgent in Walgett as it is in Washington.' Photograph: AAP

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The black American writer [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#) grapples with the brutality of his country. He lays bare the inheritance of slavery that has defied a civil war and persists to this day, more than 150 years since Lincoln's emancipation proclamation.

Coates meets the physical violence he sees all around him with the violence of his own words. [In his book *Between the World and Me*](#), he writes a letter to his son. It is a devastating and distressing assessment of the black condition in America.

"Here is what I would like for you to know: in America it is traditional to destroy the black body – it is heritage."

Coates channels the spirit of the great writer James Baldwin. Indeed he is seen as the second coming of Baldwin. As Baldwin was to the era of segregation, Coates is to the supposed "post-racial America". An America with a black man in the White House and black men dead on the streets.

Coates' book finds its inspiration in Baldwin's essay *The Fire Next Time*, where Baldwin, also in a letter, counsels his nephew:

You can only be destroyed by believing that you really are what the white world calls a nigger.

Sadly, nearly 30 years after his death, Baldwin's warning resonates in a country where a black person can end up dead at the hands of a cop for being pulled over for a broken tail light. Yes, this has happened.

A year ago this week the faultline of race split open in [Ferguson](#), Missouri. Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot dead by a white police officer, Darren Wilson.

Wilson fired his gun 12 times. Riots broke out and other cities followed.

Brown had stolen from a convenience store. He struggled with Wilson, fled, and Wilson followed. The rest is lost in the violence and confusion of the night. A grand jury decided not to indict Wilson and he was cleared by the Justice Department, which believed witnesses who corroborated Wilson's account that he shot in self-defence.

A year later people are back on Ferguson's streets calling for justice.

Michael Brown is just one of many. Eric Garner, Michael Scott, Freddie Gray: all black men, all shot dead, all symbols of injustice. How many others? Well, we don't really know. The US government doesn't keep records on people killed by police.

[The Counted is a Guardian US project](#) that collects data on police shootings in the US and its numbers are damning. Adjusted for percentage of population, African Americans are being killed by police at twice the rate of other Americans. Nearly a third of those black people killed so far this year were unarmed.

The [Washington Post says](#) 24 unarmed black men have been shot and killed by police so far this year. One every nine days.

Black Americans every day find themselves in conflict with the judicial system, locked up in shocking numbers. They are about 12% of the general population yet, according to the Justice Department, African American males make up around half of the US prison population.

There are more black men in prison than in university or college. And why are they imprisoned? The majority for non-violent drug offences.

The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People – a dominant voice in African American politics – points out five times as many white people use drugs compared with black people, yet black people are sent to prison for drug crimes at 10 times the rate of white Americans.

Of course, justice should not be about colour. And yet the truth is inescapable: it is.

Before we think this is a problem peculiar to America, consider that [Indigenous Australians](#) are not 3% of this country's population yet are a quarter of the prison population. For youth it is even worse. Incarceration rates for Indigenous children are 24 times higher than non-Indigenous kids.

Amnesty International's secretary general, Salil Shetty, has singled out Western Australia as the worst. The rates in WA, he says, are higher than for black people in the US.

Ta-Nehisi Coates does not write just of black Americans, he speaks to our experience as Indigenous people here. The need to defend our very bodies is as urgent in Walgett as it is in Washington.

A new generation in America and here is being challenged and provoked by Coates as their parents heeded the words of James Baldwin:

I have spent most of my life watching white people and outwitting them, so that I might survive.

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/12/indigenous-or-american-we-need-to-protect-black-bodies-everywhere>

Pope Philadelphia Visit 2015: Native Americans To Ask Francis To Renounce 'Doctrine of Discovery,' Past Crimes Committed By Catholic Church

By [Adam Lidgett](#) @AdamLidgett on August 13 2015 9:17 AM EDT



Pope Francis apologized on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church last month to Native Americans for the crimes committed against them during European colonization, but some Native American leaders in the U.S. want him to go beyond that. Reuters

Native American leaders want to ask Pope Francis during his visit to the U.S. to renounce a more than 500-year-old doctrine that allowed for European explorers to subjugate Native Americans when they began colonizing America, according to [Catholic Online](#). Various Native American tribal leaders are planning a protest next month while the Pope is in Philadelphia to appeal to him to repeal a 1452 “Doctrine of Discovery” signed by Pope Nicholas V authorizing European explorers to conquer infidel territory and declare war on all non-Christians, according to the [Anti-Defamation League](#). The doctrine, in place 40 years before Christopher Columbus landed in the Western Hemisphere, has never officially been renounced by the Roman Catholic Church.

The doctrine also called for the enslavement of any Native Americans explorers might find. Though other popes throughout the 16th and 17 centuries condemned the idea that Native Americans should be treated as “animals” and even at one point excommunicated any Catholic who held Native American slaves, the doctrine remains in place.

The doctrine is a very old, deep wound for Native Americans that is still relevant in today’s society, Oren Lyons, a Native American "faithkeeper" and activist, told Catholic Online.

During a July visit to Bolivia, Francis apologized to and asked forgiveness from Native Americans for “grave sins” committed by the Catholic Church when the Americas were being colonized, according to the [Independent](#). Although many Popes have preached against violence, the church has never apologized directly to Native Americans, Francis said. Native American leaders were pleased with the apology, but still want more.

Some 2 million people are planning to attend the Pope’s Philadelphia visit, and about 9,000 people have signed on as volunteers for the event, the [Harrisburg \(Pa.\) Patriot-News](#) reported.

The pope, who plans to be in Philadelphia from Sept. 25 to 27, is also [scheduled](#) to stop in Washington, D.C., and New York City during his trip to the U.S.

Direct Link: <http://www.ibtimes.com/pope-philadelphia-visit-2015-native-americans-ask-francis-renounce-doctrine-discovery-2051950>

Donald Trump Was Also A Dirtbag To Native Americans

It turns out they got the last laugh.

[Julian Brave NoiseCat](#) Native Issues Fellow, The Huffington Post
Posted: 08/12/2015 06:31 PM EDT



Donald Trump, the real estate tycoon and surprise Republican presidential frontrunner, has been spewing insults (out of his mouth or wherever) for quite some time. In the months since he announced his run for the GOP nomination, Trump has targeted [Mexicans](#), [prisoners of war](#), [women](#) and [The Huffington Post](#).

But before he became a TV personality of "The Apprentice" fame, Trump sharpened his teeth with racist attacks against the Mashantucket Pequot Nation, a Native American tribe in Connecticut.

"They don't look like Indians to me," Trump told the House Native American Affairs subcommittee in a 1993 inquiry about organized crime and policing in Indian casinos [dug up](#) by the Hartford Courant's [Dan Haar](#). "They don't look like Indians to Indians."

Trump's remarks went on for an hour, and included unsubstantiated allegations that the mafia had infiltrated Indian casinos. Many in Congress were shocked by Trump's irresponsibility.

At the time, Trump had plans to open a casino in Bridgeport, Connecticut, that would compete with the Pequots' nearby Foxwood Casino. Trump also operated the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.



Much like recent Trumpisms, the remarks drew instant indignation and accusations of racism, including a response from Connecticut's governor at the time, Lowell P. Weicker Jr., who opposed Trump's proposed Bridgeport casino.

"My opposition isn't just to casinos in Bridgeport, it's to Donald Trump," said Weicker. "We don't need that dirtbag in Connecticut."

Trump responded in a telephone call from his private jet, suggesting that the Pequots were urinating on the governor. "It's obvious that those so-called Indians have done a major number on his head," Trump told the Hartford Courant. True to form even 22 years ago, Trump added that Weicker should "concentrate on losing 125 pounds" instead of worrying about Trump's business plans.

"I can lose weight a lot faster than a bigot can lose bigotry," countered Weicker in a TV interview later that week.

But after Trump and Weicker concluded their pissing match, it was the Pequots that got the last laugh.

Their Foxwoods Casino had eclipsed the competition in Atlantic City and Las Vegas by 1993, although it had only opened two years earlier. And while Trump's plan to open a casino in Bridgeport ultimately failed, and the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City closed permanently in 2014, the Pequots' Foxwoods Casino remains one of the largest gaming operations in the country. Along with the Mohegan Tribe's nearby Mohegan Sun Casino and Resort, the two Indian Nations employed over 20,000 workers until recent retrenchments.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/donald-trump-was-also-a-dirtbag-to-native-americans_55cb9290e4b0923c12bf0688

Native American Women Are Fighting For A Better Future By Getting More College Degrees And Higher Paying Jobs Than Ever Before



[Lauren Holter](#)
a day ago [News](#)

Against tough odds, [Native American women are fighting for a better future](#) for themselves and their tribes. One in four American Indians and Alaskan Natives live in poverty, according to the Pew Research Center, but American Indian/Alaska Native women are going to college, getting better paying jobs, and owning businesses at higher rates than ever before. Their increasing success is not only improving their lives, but also showing younger Native Americans that going to university and having a high-paying career is possible, as their example is already trickling down to the next generation.

The number of American Indian/Alaska Native women [enrolled in colleges and universities nationwide increased nearly 200 percent between 1976 and 2006](#), from 37,600 to 111,000 women, and the number earning masters, doctoral, and professional degrees increased by 400 percent. Improved transportation to and from school, as well as more educational programs and mentorships offered to students early on, has helped make college more attainable for Native girls. Susan Masten, founder and co-president of Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations, tells Bustle: "Talking about Indian country and living on the reservation, there's just so much they have to overcome just to get to school." Indian reservations are generally in very rural areas, far from local colleges and public transportation. For Masten's tribe, the Yurok in Klamath, California, having some small community colleges move closer to the reservations and the tribe offering cheap transportation to the schools has made it much easier for women to pursue a degree.

More access to childcare has also drastically affected American Indian/Alaska Native women's ability to work outside the home and go to school. According to Malia Villegas, the director of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) policy research center, Native women entering college tend to be older than the average 18-year-old college freshman and often already have families. In 1997 there were [fewer than 20,000 Native children enrolled in federally funded Head Start](#) early education programs across the country, [compared to 44,000 today](#). When childcare isn't available on or near the reservation, women are forced to rely on family members to watch their kids or pay for outside childcare, so more Head Start programs makes it much less challenging.

Masten's family is the perfect example of how higher rates of American Indian/Alaska Native women earning college degrees is setting up tribes for future success. Neither Masten's mother nor father graduated from high school and she was the first in her family to go to college. She made sure all four of her siblings did the same and the five of them now have three masters degrees and own two businesses. Younger members of her family have already started following in their footsteps. "In one generation, we turned around our economic status for our entire family," Masten tells Bustle. "Now our children will have dreams and hopes of their own for higher education or entrepreneurship where that was lost for a period of time."



Because of the increase in higher education, American Indian/Alaska Native women are also working outside of the home and earning more. According to the NCAI, there were 16 percent more Native women in private sector jobs than Native men in 2011. However, like all women in America, they're affected by the pay gap, and only earn about [60 cents for every dollar white men earn](#). The number of businesses owned by Native American and Alaska Native women has more than doubled since 1997, and Native women now [own 47 percent of Native American-owned companies](#).

American Indian/Alaska Native women aren't stopping there either — they're also taking on more tribal leadership roles. According to the NCAI, nearly 25 percent of federally recognized tribes are led by women, which is much higher than state leadership nationwide, with only 12 percent of the 50 states having female governors. "Women have always been the leaders, maybe it was just in their family because they had to run a household," says Melanie Benjamin, the chief executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota. They're now becoming recognized, elected officials, which gives them more power to enact change for their whole community.



Robin Minthorn, an assistant professor in the University of New Mexico's Native American Studies department who's studied women's leadership, believes the rise in female leaders is directly related to the increase in higher education. She also believes that having more women in visible leadership positions is helping reshape how Native people view women's roles in their society. She tells Bustle: "Progress is being made in the communities as far as seeing women as leaders and people."

As for the future, these transformations can only mean positive things. More women having college degrees, higher paying jobs, and leadership roles will effect tribal relations, economies, and development, as well as create more opportunities for the generations to come. "Any aspect of life would then be impacted in a positive way because women are the backbone of the community and the backbone of their families," Benjamin says. "For a woman to be able to share that with others in the community is going to have a lasting positive impact."

Direct Link: <http://www.bustle.com/articles/103209-native-american-women-are-fighting-for-a-better-future-by-getting-more-college-degrees-and-higher>

In Bolivia's High-Altitude Capital, Indigenous Traditions Thrive Once Again

Among sacred mountains, in a city where spells are cast and potions brewed, the otherworldly is everyday



Aymara people prepare an offering to Mother Earth during the sunrise of the winter solstice ceremony in La Apacheta, El Alto, on the outskirts of La Paz. (© Gaston Brito/Reuters/Corbis)

For most of the seven years I lived in La Paz, my home was a small stucco cottage pressed into a hillside. The cement floors were cold, and the second-story roof was corrugated metal, which made rain and hail such a racket that storms often sent me downstairs. But the views more than compensated for the hassles. When I moved in, I painted the bedroom walls heron-egg blue and put the mattress so close to the window I could press my nose against the glass. At night I fell asleep watching the city lights knit

up into the stars, and in the morning I woke to a panoramic view of Illimani, the 21,000-foot peak that sits on its haunches keeping watch over Bolivia's capital. It was like living in the sky.

Once you get used to all that altitude, La Paz is best explored on foot. Walking allows you to revel in the staggering vistas while dialing into an intimate world of ritual and ceremony, whether inhaling the sweet green aroma of burning herbs along a well-worn path or coming upon a procession celebrating the saints who safeguard each neighborhood. One of my closest friends, Oscar Vega, lived a ten-minute walk from my house. Oscar is a sociologist and writer with dense gray hair, freckled cheeks, and thick eyeglasses. Every few days we had a long, late lunch or coffee, and I liked nothing better than going to meet him, hustling along steep cobblestone streets that cascade down into the main avenue known as the Prado, hoping to imitate the elegant shuffle-jog used by many *paceños* as they negotiate the pitched terrain. Men in leather jackets and pleated trousers, women in full skirts or 1980s-style pantsuits, or teenagers in Converse sneakers; they all seemed to understand this common way of moving. In La Paz, life happens on a vertical plane. Negotiating the city is always spoken of in terms of up and down because it's not just surrounded by mountains: It is mountains.

The most important things to consider in La Paz are the geography and the fact that its identity is closely tied to indigenous Aymara culture. "The mountains are everywhere," said Oscar. "But it's not just that they're there; it's also the way we're influenced by the indigenous notion that these mountains have spirits—*apus*—and that those spirits watch over everything that lives nearby."

Oscar is also passionate about seeing the city on foot. Ten years ago, when we became friends, he told me about Jaime Sáenz, the poet-flaneur of La Paz, and Sáenz's book, *Imágenes Paceñas*. It's a strange, unapologetic love letter to the city, a catalog of streets and landmarks and working-class people, punctuated by blurred photos with captions that resemble Zen koans. The very first entry is a silhouette of Illimani—the mountain—and after it, a page with a few sentences:

Illimani is simply there—it is not something that is seen... / The mountain is a presence.

Those lines ring especially true during the winter solstice, when Illimani virtually presides over the many celebrations. In the Southern Hemisphere, the day usually falls on June 21, which also marks the New Year in the tradition of the Aymara people, for whom the New Year is a deeply felt holiday. The celebration hinges on welcoming the first rays of the sun—and while you can do so anywhere the sun shines, the belief is that the bigger the view of the mountains and sky, the more meaningful the welcome.

Travel through Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile in the footsteps of the Incas and experience their influence on the history and culture of the Andean region.

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/la-paz-bolivia-aymara-indigenous-traditions-reawaken-180956143/#47xmUUcfGmbBzBE0.99>